

ISSUES RELATED TO PROPHESYING IN THE PRAXIS OF
THE CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

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To my life's companion, and Learning Assistant for the Doctor of Ministry Program,
K. Margaret Wharton
Thank you

I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, your sons and daughters will prophesy.

— Joel 2:28

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ABSTRACT

THE ISSUES OF PROPHESYING IN THE PRAXIS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY

Prophesying is an issue with diverse understanding within the global Christian community. As the focus of this thesis, it is not a reference to ‘preaching’, but rather, an enablement to speak under the influence of the Holy Spirit, without prior preparation or premeditation.

The target group for this ministry praxis investigation will be the century year old Pentecostal organization - the Church of God of Prophecy. The thesis is an inquiry into how this Spirit speech manifested during this institution’s existence. In this fleshing out of the prophesying praxis problem, consideration will be given to historical details, Biblical and theological factors, literary contexts, personal interviews, and historical documents of the target group. Since this Spirit speech has exhibited a historic tendency for misuse and abuse, this aspect will also be addressed.

A conclusion will seek to evaluate the specific findings of the project, and if needed, offer measures to assist the beneficial operation of this prophesying praxis.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM IN ITS SETTING

Introduction

Since the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when Pentecostal adherents experienced the “tongue” phenomenon due to some special Spirit visitations, they naturally claimed a link with their New Testament biblical counterparts as evidenced in the Spirit outpouring of the Acts Chapter 2 Pentecost Day experience. It is noteworthy that on that historic day, Peter, who was the apostle of the event, when justifying the strange manifestations, quoted a prophet who never mentioned “tongues” as associated with the coming Spirit’s outpouring, but rather specifically stated that they would “prophesy.” Paul, addressing the issue later, after that Pentecost Day, sought to introduce decency and order in the Spirit’s supernatural manifestations. He is the apostle who linked the “tongues” phenomenon to the prophet Isaiah, and not directly to Joel’s prophetic utterance. As he states in I Corinthians 14:21, “In the Law it is written: With other tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me.”¹

It should be noted, however, as the New Testament scholar Gordon Fee states, that it is difficult to doubt that Paul did see the prophesying phenomenon as evidence of the Spirit’s eschatological outpouring as promised by Joel 2:28-29:² “And afterward, I

¹ 1 Corinthians 14:21. NIV Translation. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.

² Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence, The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 892.

will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old-men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”

Indeed, subsequent global Spirit visitations of the late twentieth century, particularly as they were manifested in the Charismatic Movement within the historic denominations, broadened the spectrum of manifestations, moving away from the mainly “tongues” sign.³ This movement includes many who presently label themselves as “former Pentecostals,” and others outside the Classical tradition who present arguments that question the exegetical validity of “tongues” as the sign of the Spirit Baptism.⁴ It must also be noted that even the Pentecostal scholar Gordon Fee seemingly questions the biblical soundness of Spirit Baptism as a post-conversion experience.⁵ It is in this atmosphere of questioning and diverse issues that this paper seeks to revisit this issue of manifestations as it relates to Spirit Baptism, with a specific concentration on “prophesying.”

Joel’s prophetic utterance on the Spirit’s outpouring has always been of critical importance, not only because he wrote about it, but also because it is the main fulcrum on

³ The Charismatic Movement relates to a movement within historic churches that began in the 1950s. In the early stage the movement was often called “neo-Pentecostal”, but recently it has frequently been referred to as the “charismatic renewal,” or movement. Therefore, participants are usually described as “charismatics.” While related historically to “classical Pentecostalism,” the movement has largely stayed within the historic church bodies or has spilled over into interdenominational church fellowships. Hence today, the charismatic movement, despite its “classical” parentage, exists almost totally outside official Pentecostal denominations. Special doctrinal emphasis is likewise placed on the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, tongues (*glossolalia*), and the Spiritual gifts. Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 220-223.

⁴ Classical Pentecostal Churches had their origins in the U.S. at the beginning of the 20th century and are presently the largest family of Protestant Christians in the world. Known at first simply as “Pentecostal” churches, they were given the added designation “classical” in about 1960 to distinguish them from the neo-Pentecostals in the mainline (non-Pentecostal) churches and the Roman Catholic Church, which were soon called Charismatics. Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. Van Der Mass, *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002, 2003), 553.

⁵ Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011), 33. Allan Anderson is one who labels himself as a “Former Pentecostal.” Gordon D. Fee, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody: Henderson, 1991), 105-119.

which Pentecostalism's most celebrated event stands. It is the apostle Peter who, enabled by the Spirit on that memorable day, connected the strange events of the Spirit's coming to this Old Testament prophet when he quoted him in Acts 2:16-18: "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy."

But Joel's prophecy is also relevant since it reveals that the Spirit's outpouring would make prophesying available for "all" people, no longer a restricted experience limited to the three Old Testament categories of prophets, priests, and kings. This is undoubtedly very groundbreaking. This one enablement of the Spirit, the ability to prophesy, speaking words inspired by God's Spirit, would be available to "all" people – sons, daughters, female and male servants. The prophet Joel's relevance to this thesis is considered a key element, and specific emphasis will be given to the practical outworking of the Spirit's prophesying praxis as it relates particularly in the context of the Church of God of Prophecy.

General Issues of, and Clarifying of the Prophesying Praxis Topic

The topic of 'Prophesying' presents us with an issue that requires diverse understanding and consequently, many questions, generally within the global Christian community itself. Essential to this discussion is the need to provide immediate clarity to that aspect of 'Prophesying', that is the focus of this thesis. It is not a reference to its very popular function of 'preaching' that in some Christian quarters is accepted as being the

only orthodox understanding of the issue. Rather, the topic being addressed focuses on an impromptu kind of utterance that is genuinely informed by the Spirit himself. It is that enablement to speak under the influence of the Spirit, without prior preparation or premeditation – no notes or studying, but spontaneous intelligible utterances – that are primarily Spirit informed.⁶ Prophesying in this context, since it is not a reference to preaching, where someone actively premeditates and prepares notes, is seen as more likely what Jesus had in mind when he stated in Mark 13:11: “Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.”

As indicated in the introduction, the target group for this ministry praxis investigation will be the century year old Pentecostal organization - the Church of God of Prophecy. This thesis will be a specific inquiry into how this Spirit speech manifested during this institution’s existence. Although the COGOP organization has a limited written account of its history,⁷ it will nevertheless afford us the opportunity to consult and review relative documents dealing with this issue.⁸ Additionally, in the fleshing out of the prophesying praxis problem, this thesis will also give serious consideration to other aspects of academic inquiries that bear on the subject. It will therefore bring into this consideration historical details, Biblical and theological factors, literary contexts, personal interviews as necessary, and add a conclusion that will seek to evaluate the specific findings of the project.

⁶ Fee, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics*, 890, 891.

⁷ COGOP as used in this article is the acronym for the ‘Church of God of Prophecy’.

⁸ *Cyclopedic Index of Assembly Minutes and Important Business Acts 1906 -1974* (Cleveland: White Wing Publishing House, 1975). COGOP historical documents record countless ‘Tongues & Interpretations’ messages from the organization’s early history and onwards.

Since this Spirit speech has exhibited a historic tendency to present possibilities for problematic misuse and abuse, it is of necessity that this thesis also addresses this aspect of this Spirit manifestation. Like a persistent thorn in the flesh, the practical outworking of this genuine Spirit manifestation has historically presented negatives that have powerfully overwhelmed its positive benefits. This area also includes competition from wicked spirit sources, and indigenous folk religion practices that counterfeit the genuine prophecy gifting of the Holy Spirit.⁹ It has plagued God's people since early biblical times, consequently prompting the apostle Paul to issue Spirit inspired guidelines. If the evidence leads in that direction, this article will suggest some measures to assist in the beneficial operation of this Spirit praxis.

Brief Introduction to COGOP: Organization & Development

Certain historical issues have impacted the COGOP organization negatively, consequently affecting its image both in the eyes of the Christian community, and the secular arena. This has caused COGOP to have been seen by some for a long period of its history as possibly a cult, operating on a close to the fringe of Christian Orthodoxy.

In seeking to properly understand the growth pains of this century old organization, I would suggest a parallel to the normal human life experiences of adults, which are closely related to the experiences of their childhood environment. This therefore necessitates a revisiting of the birthing period of the organization that will enable us to grasp the

⁹ David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1983), 17, 23. Professor Aune's groundbreaking work of Prophecy was the first to address this issue. He contended that it was essential that the two linguistic and cultural traditions be considered for a healthy understanding of the historic Christian prophetic phenomenon. There was a recognition of the various terms given to those who prophesied in the various cultures: mantis, shaman, seer, sorcerer, medium, witch, and prophet.

concept of the crucible that created the peculiar vision that produced such zeal in the founding fathers of COGOP in their attempt to rectify, as they saw it, the shortcomings, or weaknesses, of the 'Body of Christ.' This was their personal vision, that became a life-long quest that undergirded all aspects of the organization's functions, consequently producing certain historic misconceptions and frictions, both internally and externally in the religious arena.

It has been stated that "The issues that gave rise both to Holiness independence and to Pentecostalism can be attributed to the aims of the original promoters of the 19th century revival, who traced the church's malady to lack of the marks of sanctification."¹⁰ The credit for this holiness thrust belongs mainly to the Methodists, who in 1867 founded the "National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness."¹¹

In many ways, Methodism is the mother church for the hundreds of holiness and Pentecostal denominations that have arisen in the past century. Founded in 18th-century England by John Wesley and his followers, it arose as a renewal movement in the Church of England of which Wesley was a priest. The name Methodist was given by derision to Wesley and his friends in the Holy Club at Oxford University in the 1720s. By following a method of prayer, confession, and frequent Communion, this group of university students attempted to fulfill the admonition of Hebrews 12:14, "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord."¹² In the process of pursuing holiness, it was Wesley who developed the theology of the second blessing of sanctifica-

¹⁰ Burgess et al., *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 726.

¹¹ Burgess et al., *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 726.

¹² Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit, 1901-2001, 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 178.

tion, which could be received after conversion. The idea of subsequence, that is, a second-blessing experience following conversion, is thus the basic theological principle of the Holiness movements.

However, the Holiness movement did have its problems, when some extremists in its independent communities developed the idea that the believer should depend on the Spirit alone for guidance. This idea, though seemingly having a positive spiritual goal, experienced serious problems when extremists in some of these independent spirit communities rejected even Scripture, and the wise counsel of their church elders for guidance.¹³ It was also around this time that Benjamin Hardin Irvin promulgated his new teaching of the baptism with the Holy Spirit as the post-sanctification third experience of grace, progressing into various blessings such as dynamite, lyddite, and oxidite.¹⁴ Irvin proceeded to consolidate his teachings by organizing Fire-Baptized associations, beginning in 1895 in the Midwestern State of Iowa.¹⁵

Shortly before this (1886), in the East of the country, Richard G. Spurling Sr. of Monroe County, Tennessee, expressed much dissatisfaction over what he considered to be rather “burdensome traditions and creeds,” and so spent much time in prayer and fasting, seeking God for a renewal.¹⁶ Spurling Sr. did not live long after that, but his son R. G. Spurling Jr. took over the work and survived through difficult times with much prayer. It was also around 1896 when a different group that was likewise from Monroe County, Tennessee, and who believed in sanctification as the second definite work of grace that

¹³ Burgess et al., *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 726.

¹⁴ Burgess et al., *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 727.

¹⁵ Burgess et al., *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 727.

¹⁶ C. T. Davidson, *Upon This Rock* (Cleveland: White Wing Publishing House, 1973), 292.

was subsequent to justification, went over to Cherokee County, North Carolina, and started revival meetings.

It was this group that experienced an historic outpouring of the Spirit that saw over one hundred people receiving the Spirit Baptism, speaking in other tongues as the Spirit empowered them to.¹⁷ However, after facing much opposition and difficulties that left them without a place of worship, this group moved to the home of W. F. Bryant. It is at this same W. F. Bryant home in North Carolina, after struggling for several years, that the leaders of the Spurling Jr. group met on May 15, 1902 to somewhat reorganize to solve some problems, and meet the challenges of the new century. The new revived group was given the name “Holiness Church at Camp Creek.”¹⁸

Tomlinson, A. J.: An Introduction

Providence is rather mysterious. God’s Spirit during this period was also preparing another vessel – his name is A. J. Tomlinson. A colporteur, Tomlinson, who was being pressed into the ministry by the Spirit, moved from Indiana to Culberson, North Carolina on Wednesday, May 27, 1903.¹⁹ Shortly after he arrived at his new residence, the same group that had reorganized in 1902 at the Bryant home in North Carolina, was preparing to have a special meeting on June 13, 1903. Since Tomlinson was acquainted with several individuals of the group, he was invited to join them for the study of God’s Word.²⁰

¹⁷ C. T. Davidson, *Upon This Rock*, 294-297.

¹⁸ Adrian L. Varlack, *Foundations Church of God of Prophecy, Concise History, Polity, Doctrine, and Future* (Cleveland: White Wing Publishing House, 2010), 18.

¹⁹ Davidson, *Upon This Rock*, 312.

²⁰ Davidson, *Upon This Rock*, 312.

Having spent some time in deep prevailing prayer that Saturday morning, June 13th, prior to the meeting, Tomlinson felt that he was being led the Spirit to be part of this group, convinced that he was becoming part of a special move of God.²¹ This was also the date that he was accepted into membership, ordained, and appointed as Pastor of the newly reorganized body.²² Thus, for the group and the organization that it later became (COGOP), the date Saturday June 13, 1903 is memorable and historic, primarily due the entrance made that day of the most effective, powerful, and charismatic leader in the organization's history.

Tomlinson continued to lead the organization through times of prosperity and difficulty until his death in 1943. On May 2, 1952, the High Court of Chancery in Cleveland, Tennessee, added the suffix 'of Prophecy' to legally identify the Tomlinson faction of the two contesting 'Church of God' bodies. From that period, the organization became officially known as the "Church of God of Prophecy" in compliance with the court's requirements.²³ The abbreviation "COGOP" came into use shortly after.

COGOP'S Crucial Links to Pentecostalism

Since this first chapter serves as an introduction to our thesis, "Issues related to prophesying in the praxis of the Church of God of Prophecy," there is a vital need to further consider the individual, and the prevailing spiritual events that formed the catalyst that ushered the organization into its Pentecostal experience. Soon after the memorable date of 1903, A.J. Tomlinson was introduced to the Azusa Street Los Angeles Pentecostal

²¹ Davidson, *Upon This Rock*, 314-15.

²² Lillie Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson* (Cleveland: White Wing Publishing House & Press, 1964), 34-35.

²³ Varlack, *Foundations*, 23.

Revival of 1906-1909. This revival was the culmination of much prayer around a new teaching that promoted the idea of Spirit Baptism, and its initial evidence of tongues - *glossolalia*, in Greek.²⁴ Since many seemingly spoke in some recognized foreign languages, the idea of *xenolalia* was further introduced, with the declaration that Missionaries no longer need to learn a foreign language, Spirit Baptism will now solve this difficulty for those going to the mission fields.²⁵

For Classical Pentecostalism, this is the foundation event that spread the tongues phenomenon globally.²⁶ Author James Smith explains how the Azusa Street revival was the catalyst for denominations like the Church of God (*linked to COGOP*), the Church of God in Christ, and the Assemblies of God, that came under this umbrella of “classical” Pentecostalism. They were distinguished by their emphasis of speaking in tongues as “the initial physical evidence” of Spirit baptism, though they also expressed belief in all the supernatural gifts of the Spirit – all of which were directed toward empowerment for missions.²⁷

Pentecostalism’s womb of formation was primarily tongues. Consequently, in reviewing the records of this historic event from various authors, one should note the ab-

²⁴ The technical term *glossolalia* derives from *glossais lalein*, a Greek phrase used in the NT meaning literally “to speak in or with tongues.” The usually, but not exclusively, religious phenomenon of making sounds that constitute, or resemble, a language not known to the speaker. In the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, it is widely and distinctively viewed as the certifying consequence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. *Xenolalia*, a more frequent synonym of *xenoglossia*, describes *glossolalia* when the language spoken is identifiable as one among the over 3,000 known to occur on the globe. It is the most difficult variety of *glossolalia* to document, yet the most widely reported among global cultures. Burgess, et al., *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 670-675.

²⁵ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971), 99-102.

²⁶ James K. A. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues, Pentecostal Contributions to Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010), xv.

²⁷ Smith, *Thinking in Tongues*, xv1.

sence or rather sparse mention of prophesying as a related evidence of any import of the Spirit Baptism in their pages. It was in that prevailing atmosphere of the tongues phenomenon that Tomlinson functioned, and he consequently opened his heart to this new wave of Spirit manifestation that, like a mighty wind, was sweeping through the existing Holiness Movements with which Tomlinson had aligned himself.

By then he was the unquestioned leader of the growing work, and the organization looked to him for guidance when any new move of the Spirit seemed to appear among the people of God. Tomlinson visited Birmingham, Alabama, in June 1907 to hear G. B. Cashwell, a North Carolina preacher who had visited and received the Pentecostal experience at the Azusa Street Revival. Tomlinson did not get to meet Cashwell in Birmingham, but later invited him to speak on the Spirit Baptism experience at the Church's General Assembly in January 1908. Not wanting to miss out on what might be a historic move of the Spirit, he encouraged his followers to seek this new experience, and he himself led the way.

Even though he arrived after the Assembly had officially closed, Caswell still was able to preach, and it was during his sermon that Tomlinson received his Spirit baptism, which was recorded as being one of the most colorful in all the literature of Pentecostalism; he spoke in approximately "ten different tongues in succession."²⁸ Tomlinson, in his own words, vividly described his own Spirit visitation, how under the power of the Spirit he visited several foreign countries and spoke to them in their native language.²⁹ After giving the names of those countries, he was then brought back to familiar areas around

²⁸ Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit, 1901-2001, 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 117-118.

²⁹ Hector Ortiz, and Adrian Varlack, *Diary of A. J. Tomlinson* (Cleveland, White Wing Publishing House, 2015), 79. Works compiled by Dr. Hector Ortiz, PhD, and Historian Bishop Adrian L. Varlack.

his home base in Cleveland, Tennessee.³⁰ He also recounts how the Spirit through unknown tongues used him to cast out devils, in remembrance of the passage in Mark 16 on casting out devils, and speaking in tongues. He even remembered singing in tongues, and mentions that he spoke in approximately ten different languages; he consequently concluded, “This was really the Baptism of the Holy Ghost as they received Him on the day of Pentecost, for they all spoke with tongues.”³¹ As the undoubted leader of the group he pastored, his Spirit Baptism experience served to usher the organization into the classical Pentecostal tradition from which it has never departed.

It is understandable, that even though Tomlinson was conscious of the prophetic, his theology was of the prevailing tongues evidence; consequently, it would have been rather difficult for him to link his visions to Joel’s “They shall prophesy.” Yet, it could be suggested, that this is precisely what the Spirit was doing through him to all the people groups that he visited and interacted with on the various continents. He was presenting the gospel to them in their native language. This is not ‘unknown tongues,’ but prophesying, done through the vehicle of tongues. There seems to be a similarity between Tomlinson’s experience and the Acts 2 event, when the Spirit enabled the 120 to speak in various tongues/languages, for the worshipers heard them declaring the wonders of God in their own language - they heard and understood the languages.³²

Understanding the tongues atmosphere that prevailed at that time is indispensable to the presentation of this problem of prophesying, since that generation of Pentecostals

³⁰ *Diary of A. J. Tomlinson*, 80.

³¹ *Diary of A. J. Tomlinson*, 80

³² D. A. Carson, General Editor, *NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2015), Acts 2:6, 8,

laid the DNA, or foundational principles of Pentecostalism and its unique Spirit Baptism experience. For them, that experience was grounded in the understanding of the ‘Initial physical evidence’ of speaking in tongues as the requisite for acknowledging the receipt of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Even though our early Pentecostal Church Fathers believed in prophesying, there was no defining link made between the Spirit prophesying as Joel 2:28-29 stated, and Spirit Baptism as they received it from their study of Acts 2.

Though they believed in the operation of the nine supernatural gifts of the Spirit as proclaimed in I Corinthians 12, including prophesying, for the COGOP organization, the tongues issue prevailed, and as the organization’s history reveals, it dominated the oral speech gifts of the Spirit. Tongues and Interpretation prevailed over the Spirit manifestation of prophesying, and subsequently proved to be normative in the praxis of the COGOP organization. Consequently, in addressing this thesis problem of prophesying, understanding this aspect of the COGOP’S introduction into Pentecostalism is pivotal, since it lays the foundation for the organization’s special form of the praxis of prophesying, in its alternative of form of ‘Tongues and Interpretation.’

Tongues & Interpretation of Tongues: An Alternative to Prophesying

Since this thesis centers on the prophesying praxis problem in the COGOP, it becomes necessary to consider its alternative form of ‘Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues,’ which throughout the organization’s history was the prevailing form of this prophesying praxis. James Dunn’s research on the issue is relevant.³³

³³ James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit, A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experiences of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997).

He states that Paul's contrast between prophesying and tongues is between two forms of inspired speech. Paul thought of tongues as inspired speech 'without the mind,' or not intelligible, but it is valued because it is a charisma, a manifestation of the Spirit, an inspired utterance - the Spirit speaking through him. Additionally, Dunn mentions that the apostle thinks of it as language, since he wrote in I Corinthians 13:1, "If I speak in the tongues of men and angels, and further seemingly holding a secret conversation with God, for anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit." To Dunn, it is most obvious that Paul thought of tongues (*glossolalia*), as speaking the language of heaven.³⁴ While acknowledging that this Spirit speech caused much confusion in the Corinthian church, Dunn nevertheless concludes "that *glossolalia* was a phenomenon familiar among both Jewish and Hellenistic Christians of the first century and beyond, that it was recognized as a manifestation of the Spirit, and that it held a place of some significance within individuals' lives and within the Christian mission."³⁵

It is obvious, in consideration of the foregoing, that for the tongue gift to be beneficial to the believing community, there needs to be a corresponding interpretation of whatever possible 'foreign' or 'heavenly' language that is spoken. Simply put, one must understand what is said, before a rational response can be given. This is precisely where the 'sister' gift of 'Interpretation' comes in. It is this twin of the pair (*tongues & interpretation*) that makes an understanding possible, by bringing the message into the realm of human understanding. Dunn refers to the meaning of the word interpretation in wider

³⁴ Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 242-245.

³⁵ Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 246.

Greek thought, or wider semantic range, as “to interpret, expound, explain.”³⁶ He further states, that “interpretation is not an independent gift; it is precisely interpretation *of tongues*. The two ‘gifts’ go together – tongues and interpretation, the two sides of the one coin.”³⁷

This explanation is helpful in allowing us to understand why Paul contrasts prophesying and tongues, not as to inspiration, but intelligibility. Both are Spirit inspired speech, however, tongues (*glossolalia*), is unintelligible, while prophesying is intelligible.³⁸ Thus, in praxis, relative to a congregational setting, audible tongues alone is not beneficial, unless it is followed by an interpretation, enabling the believers to understand what the Spirit is saying. Paul therefore, in making a reference to prophesying and the two gifts of ‘tongues and interpretation,’ speaks of an alternative or equivalence in function when he states in I Corinthians 14:5, “He who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets so that the church may be edified.” Since the COGOP organization during its history has exhibited a preference for the ‘tongue and interpretation’ praxis option, consideration will be given to this alternative Spirit speech, as the thesis on this prophesying problem is addressed.

Issues to be Considered in the prophesying Praxis of the COGOP

To enable a meaningful outcome and conclusion to the prophesying problem in the COGOP organization, several issues will be considered, researched, and properly evaluated:

³⁶ Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 247.

³⁷ Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 247.

³⁸ Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 229.

1. An Investigation of the COGOP'S Prophesying Praxis.
2. An Evaluation of COGOP'S Dependence on Tongues and Interpretation as a Pivotal Decision-Making Tool.
3. The Biblical and Theological Soundness of the Prophesying Praxis.
4. The Spirit Community's Academic Considerations.
5. The Organization's Historical Neglect in the Manifestation of the Prophesying Gift.
6. An Evaluation of the Modern Praxis of Both Aspects of the Spirit Manifestation, Prophesying, and Tongues and Interpretation.
7. Benefits Associated with the Manifestation of These Spirit Gifts.
8. Negatives Associated With These Spirit Gifts.
9. The Lack of a Corporate Discernment Methodology That Would Serve to Effectively Evaluate These Oral Spirit Manifestations.
10. The Need for a Corrective Measures Standard That Would Assist A Corporate Discernment Methodology.

Connecting Chapters: The Issue of Prophesying

It seems obvious that there is a problem with the Spirit gift of prophesying, and later chapters will seek to clarify and evaluate this problem.

It is a given that the Biblical worldview on this Spirit manifestation establishes the standard for its individual and spirit community operation. The thesis will thus be null and void absent this vital aspect of its essential knowledge. A chapter on Biblical and Theological Foundations will seek to deal with this problem of prophesying, inquiring

what the Bible's position is on the issue, that is, what is the theological perspective on this Spirit praxis.

Being so far removed from the time-period and circumstances of the original prophets and apostles and their famous utterances, it is of critical importance that their writings be revisited in their historical setting, consequent to the acquiring of an authentic understanding of their concept of the subject at hand – in other words, how did men like Joel and his Jewish peers understand prophesying? Further, why would Peter the apostle state that Joel's famous Spirit outpouring prophecy was fulfilled on that historic Pentecost Day described in Acts chapter 2, and what does this fulfillment mean for the bridging of the centuries that lay between the early Church and the modern Ekklesia that seeks to complete the task of global evangelism? Additionally, what are the primary thoughts of the apostle Paul on the thesis issue, and what, if any, is the difference between the New Testament's understanding of prophesying, and the other oral Spirit speeches of tongues and interpretation?

A Project Design Chapter is considered the 'nuts and bolts' of addressing this problem of prophesying. It presents the methodology used to provide the raw material of the COGOP organization's praxis of the prophesying phenomenon. Even though the COGOP organization offers a limited record of its long history, portions of these writings are relevant to this thesis. Records of its historic gatherings are contained in its "Assembly Minutes," and these will be consulted for applicable material for this thesis problem.³⁹ This research will also be applied to include certain individuals of this Spirit community who indicate an acceptable level of experience in the exercise of this Spirit speech

³⁹ *Cyclopedic Index of Assembly Minutes and Important Business Acts 1906 -1974* (Cleveland: White Wing Publishing House, 1975).

praxis. Additionally, interviews of certain established and knowledgeable COGOP leaders will be conducted, using questionnaires, and surveys where applicable, to provide the relevant thesis information, subsequently providing the needed data for proper evaluation.

In a concluding chapter, the thesis research outcomes will be presented, taking careful note of the positives and negatives of the thesis-project issue. The evidence gained from the various research tools mentioned, the Literature review, the Historical materials, the Biblical and Theological context, and the Spirit praxis of the specific target group of the COGOP organization, will hopefully be a rich consultation resource for the COGOP group, and the general Spirit community. My personal ministry experience will be mentioned, and irrespective of the outcome, whether it validates or invalidates the thesis proposition, or makes it better by suggested changes, or corrective measures, it will hopefully still be beneficial for the global Spirit community.

Conclusion

As this chapter indicates, it seems obvious that there is a problem with prophesying, as it encounters an atmosphere of diverse practices and understandings within the global Christian community.

The target group for this ministry praxis investigation is the Church of God of Prophecy. The thesis therefore, will be an inquiry into specifically how this Spirit speech has manifested during this institution's existence. Hopefully, some clarity and edification will be brought to this problem.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Precedence

The content of this chapter seeks to analyze the thesis issue through research of a select number of resources that have presented academic views on the subject. Since the thesis is looking to add to what others have already generated, precedent research is a most necessary aspect of this chapter's general literature review. The goal is to investigate a specific aspect of the subject that existing precedent research has not conducted, thus hoping to enlarge the spirit community's knowledge.

The examination will focus on information gathered from qualified academic bibliographical resources and any relevant periodical literature. General historical, along with modern global, experiences will further help in the analysis of the thesis praxis, in the consideration of whether it is an aberration or anomaly, or one that has existed as a genuine Spirit manifestation, presenting us with many positive patterns and benefits for the historical and modern Church community.

Additionally, this literature review will attempt to show that prophesying as addressed in this article, even though showing some similarities to the gift of preaching, is nevertheless, a Spirit phenomenon whose *modus operandi* is different from that of a well-studied and prepared message that goes with the art of preaching. However, consideration will also be given to the ideas presented by a conflicting view, which has proved to be rather essential as to how other Christian believers view the supernatural operations of the Holy Spirit's gifts.

Early Historic Understanding of Prophesying

Being so far removed from the time and circumstances of the original prophets and their famous utterance, it would be considered most appropriate to revisit the historic setting pursuant to acquiring a genuine understanding of the subject at hand. Accordingly, in seeking to understand the praxis of prophesying in its historical setting, the works of some academics whose research have played an important role in this area, will be consulted.

Ronald Kidd refers to statements of Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, one early church father who spent much of his time contending against Gnostic heresies and false ideas of the Christian faith. In one section of his writings, Irenaeus mentions those among them who “have foreknowledge of things to be, and visions and prophetic speech, and others who cure the sick by the laying on of the hand.”¹ Kidd also quotes from another section of Irenaeus’ writings where he presents his personal eyewitness account of specifically those who exercised the gift of prophecy, revealing the hidden things of men.² Another of Kidd’s quotes is Eusebius Bishop of Caesarea whose famous Ecclesiastical History is considered to be the first historical writings penned by these early Church Fathers. The quote is taken from a section where Eusebius deals with what he considers to be false prophesying, but in the process acknowledges that the Spirit gifts still operate in the early

¹ Ronald A. N. Kidd, *Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church, The Gifts of the Spirit in the First 300 Years* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2014), 45. Kidd is Assistant Professor of Church History at Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, Canada. His book is an academic research of the writings of the early Church Fathers of the first 300 years of church history, where he explores the chronological journey of Spirit gifts operations.

² Kidd, *Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church*, 46. In mentioning Irenaeus’ eye witness account, Kidd quotes from “*Against Heresies*, 5, 6:1.” Just as we hear many brethren in the church who have the gift of prophecy, and who speak through the Spirit with all manner of tongues, and who bring the hidden things of men into the clearness for the common good, and expound the mysteries of God.

church.³

This author also indicates that Eusebius, while reporting on the existence of gifts of the Spirit, also spent time contending with the Montanists, whom he categorized as counterfeit prophets, “some of whom crept like venomous reptiles over Asia and Phrygia, pretending that Montanus was the Paraclete, but that the two women who followed him, Priscilla and Maximilla, were prophetesses of Montanus.”⁴ Kidd thus lends his support to this issue of prophesying by showing some continuity of the Spirit manifestation, sometime after the first-generation early church leaders. He thus demonstrated that the Church of his time experienced the Spirit’s gifts, particularly prophesying and tongues.

Thoughts on Prophesying and Preaching

Larry McQueen, in his comment on Joel 2:28, 29, states that the specific activity that will accompany this corporate endowment of the Spirit is prophecy.⁵ It is also important to note that he further goes on to describe this activity as inspired spontaneous utterance.⁶ Additionally, he indicates that when Peter links the events of Acts 2 to Joel 2:28, 29, he is clearly expressing a continuation of the Old Testament understanding of

³ Kidd, *Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church*, 48.

⁴ Eusebius Pamphilus, *Ecclesiastical History* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969), 194. Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, in his “Ecclesiastical History,” presents a summary of Christian Doctrine in the Primitive Church, of events covering the first three centuries. In his introduction section, v, he acknowledges the general accounts of some at that time who were distinguished for prophetic gifts and miracles. In section vii of his introduction, he rails against the Montanists, whom he considered to be pretended prophets.

⁵ Larry R. McQueen, *Joel and the Spirit, The Cry of a Prophetic Hermeneutic* (Cleveland: CPT Press, 2009), 33, 34. He states that in the Hebrew Bible, prophecy, dreams, and visions, are means of revelations from God. Every member of the community will be able to stand in Yahweh’s counsel and hear His word first hand. Consequently, the pouring out of Yahweh’s Spirit will enable His people to be His messengers.

⁶ McQueen, *Joel and the Spirit*, 56. He gets this understanding from Paul, who mentions this Spirit gift most often, implying that it occurred more frequently than other charismatic phenomena in the Pauline churches. He states that Paul understood prophecy to consist of spontaneous, intelligible messages, orally delivered in the gathered assembly, intended for the edification or encouragement of the people.

God's Spirit as the Spirit of prophecy. Even the mission of the early disciples, like that of Jesus and prophets of the Old Testament before him, is considered prophetic activity, characterized above all as a mission to speak the word of God. Joel's text could thus be seen as not just limited to the Acts 2 event, but seemingly paradigmatic of the Spirit's activities in Acts.⁷

McQueen is joined by Gordon Fee, who arrives at a similar conclusion by statements that emphasize the Spirit's activity in this area of prophecy as not given to the order of sermons that are generated through much study and human mental activity, but are definitely impromptu messages, inspired by the Spirit.⁸ Fee uses Paul's text: Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil (I Thess 5:19-21), to indicate that prophesying was a normal activity of the Spirit in the Christian N.T. community.⁹ Fee acknowledges that prophesying was also a widespread phenomenon in the Greek world, but that it did not affect Paul's understanding of the issue, since it was conditioned by his Jewish history which majored in the prophets who spoke to the people under the inspiration of God's Spirit.¹⁰

⁷ McQueen, *Joel and the Spirit*, 40, 44. The insertion in Acts 2:18 of "...they shall prophesy," as an addition, emphasizes the Lukan view of the Spirit as the Spirit of prophecy. The prophetic nature of the Spirit is evident throughout the book of Acts to produce inspired speech (Acts 10:46, 19:6).

⁸ Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence, The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 59, 60: In support of the contention that this is the way Paul understood the gift of prophecy. It was spontaneous, and consisted of intelligible messages, that encouraged and edified the people.

⁹ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 60. The utterance is understood to be from the Holy Spirit, evidence that God is among them, and as probably a means of hearing from God as a way of giving direction and consolation to a persecuted community. Not absolute as revelation, not to be despised, but since they come through human vessels, are to be tested.

¹⁰ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 890.

The following text of Paul's is also considered by Fee to be relevant to the discussion: Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets (I Cor 14:29-32). This text is presented by Fee as evidence of spontaneity, since a 'revelation' comes to another while one person is still 'prophesying.' This ideally sets prophesying apart from preaching.¹¹ He additionally uses the combined evidence of I Thessalonians 5:21-22, and I Corinthians 14:29 to show that since it is 'discerned' by the Spirit community, there is obviously no independent authority, which further sets it apart from normal preaching.¹²

Author Wayne Grudem likewise supports this contention when he views prophecy as being a spontaneous phenomenon of the Holy Spirit that speaks to the needs of the moment, imparting edification, encouragement, and comfort.¹³ He makes use of the Pauline text in 1 Timothy 1:18 "the former prophecies about you" that would seem to indicate the methodology through which Timothy's personal ministry gifts were identified, both to himself and to the congregation, contending that it could not be referring to preaching, which, even though a Spirit enabled function, does not, and could not meet such specific needs. He also makes references to the New Testament prophet Agabus in Acts 11:27-28, and 21:10-11, to show the predictive element of the gift, as well as its revelatory elements in I Corinthians 14:29-33, thus further differentiating it from preaching.¹⁴

¹¹ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 891

¹² Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 891.

¹³ Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy, in the New Testament and Today* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2000), 19.

¹⁴ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 299.

Ernest B. Gentile, in his book “Your Sons and Daughters Shall Prophesy,” is another voice that takes a similar approach in the understanding and explanation of this prophesying Spirit phenomenon. Concerning the essential nature of this gift of prophesying, he brings clarity by stating that it is not meant to replace or supersede the Bible, but when used properly it does make Bible truths more relatable by awakening people to realize that God is interested in them, both now and in their future.¹⁵ To emphasize the difference with the Canon, he categorically states that this represents God-breathed words by the Prophets that were inscripturated into the Bible – inerrant and original, without possibility of error or need of evaluation – this is God’s eternal word, as Scripture, it is complete! However, prophesying, as constituted by the gift as given to the New Testament Church, and as it functions in modern days, though also Spirit-quickened words that may be 100% accurate, is not on par with the sacred Canon. These must be tested and approved by the congregation as required by apostolic decree. Such domestic, community prophecies, called a “word from the Lord” (a *rhema*),¹⁶ are accepted as authentic, but subject to evaluation by the congregation.¹⁷

Graham Cooke also provides profitable insight when he recommends that there is value in prophecy through its ability to offer corrective measures, provide direction, enhance vision, confirm the preached word, and provide a spirit of thanksgiving and praise.¹⁸ Incidentally, Gordon Fee adds, that of all the Spirit manifestations, prophecy is

¹⁵ Ernest B. Gentile, *Your Sons and Daughters Shall Prophesy, Prophetic Gifts in the Church Today* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 1999), 22.

¹⁶ W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1981), 230. *rhema*: Greek; denotes that which is spoken; in the singular, a word. It’s significance, as distinct from *logos*, is exemplified in the injunction to take “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God,” Eph 6:17; here the reference is not to the whole Bible as such, but to the individual scripture which the Spirit brings to our remembrance for use in time of need.

¹⁷ Gentile, *Your Sons and Daughters Shall Prophesy*, 32.

¹⁸ Graham Cooke, *Developing Your Prophetic Gifting* (Kent: Sovereign World, 1994), 7, 8.

mentioned most often, and this demonstrates its wide- ranging occurrences in the churches under Paul’s apostleship.¹⁹ This paper would be rather remiss if it failed to include the thoughts of acknowledged Jewish sage Abraham Joshua Heschel. In his seminal work “The Prophets,” he ably addresses a thorny aspect of the prophetic gifting with its seeming contradictions at times, and questions if such apparent contradictions invalidate the prophetic utterance. Heschel insists that this is not the case, since the prophetic does not function in the human arena only, but is an interface with the divine and human – it is the thoughts of God relayed through the human imperfect medium. Consequently, in the delivery and interpretation (understanding), contradictions are inevitable.²⁰

This comment does offer a strong antidote for defense, particularly against the section of doubters of the prophetic gifting, who would readily label as false that which they either do not believe in, or fail to comprehend. It also serves as wise admonition to the believing crowd, who very often are quick to initiate a false description to a prophetic utterance that does not immediately produce a result in line with what seems to be an obvious expectation.

Early Christian & Jewish Spirit Manifestations and

Ancient Mediterranean Oracular Phenomenon

In his very extensive work, “Prophecy in Early Christianity,” David Aune categorically states that a discussion of Christian prophecy, in its historical context, would be

¹⁹ Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 890, 891.

²⁰ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2014), 25. Heschel served as Jewish Professor of Ethics and Mysticism at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS) from 1946 until his death in 1972. He was widely recognized by Christians and Jews, as the voice of Biblical Judaism in the United States.

incomplete without due consideration given to the prophetic traditions which characterized the social and cultural conditions of the Corinthians and other believers, since cultural formation does matter. His study championed the idea, that the influence of Hellenistic revelatory traditions was even more influential on Early Christianity than previously recognized. He suggested that not only was it essential that the Israelite-Jewish revelatory and prophetic tradition be considered in order to understand fully the phenomenon of early Christian prophecy, but also that the Greco-Roman oracular and prophetic traditions must be made part of the picture.²¹ He paints a broad picture of the function of Christian prophets, and prophecy that allows for preaching, along with the impromptu element that also serves to edify, exhort, and console.²²

Aune discusses Oracles and divination and how they played a regular and significant role in the Greek and Roman societies from ancient times, down to the early Christian era around the fourth century A.D. It was a regular and continual means for determining the will of the gods on possibly every conceivable issue. Divination could be defined as the art or science of interpreting symbolic messages from the gods. Oracles, however, are messages from the gods in human language, received as statements from a god, usually in response to an inquiry. There were also varieties of interpretations that lent themselves to the various forms of divination. The practitioner of this prophetic art

²¹ David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity, and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1983), 17. Aune was a professor of New Testament and Christian origins. His groundbreaking work on prophecy in Early Christianity was the first to address this issue. In his estimation, it was essential that the two linguistic and cultural traditions of the Israelite-Jewish revelatory and prophetic tradition and the Greco-Roman oracular and prophetic traditions be considered for a healthy understanding of the historic Christian prophetic phenomenon. Consequently, his book dedicates four chapters to these near Eastern prophetic traditions.

²² Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 19.

was in the Greek nomenclature considered to be a *mantis*.²³ This picture undoubtedly paints a parallel to the conditions of their Asian and African counterparts of shamanism and spirit possessed tribal witches, whose cultural traditions would also seemingly influence the Christian practice of prophesying.

Aune elaborates on these Greco-Roman prophetic traditions by indicating that the *mantis*, when translated, refers to a diviner, soothsayer, seer, or at times a prophet.²⁴ The ancient Mediterranean world further distinguished between the technical and the natural diviner, in that the former is dependent on training and skill that is applied to the observation and interpretation of dreams, signs, sacrifices, and omens, while the latter is influenced by direct inspiration of the *mantis* through a vision, trance, or an ecstatic encounter. In what might be considered a second category, the oracular individual inquires of the gods employs three techniques that were available: 1. the casting of lots; 2. dreams; 3. the inspired oracle. Sometimes these oracles functioned in a special shrine, through a specialized endowed individual, or also experienced where everyone was a potential *mantis*.²⁵

This author is correct in his observation that many of the typical features of the natural inspired oracular divination bear a strong similarity to spirit phenomena in early Christianity and Judaism. Additionally, the casting of lots is an acknowledged and well-

²³ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 23. Concerning the trance like experience of the ‘natural diviner’ in the Greco-Roman tradition, Aune quotes Plato in *Ion* 534d: “And for this reason God takes away the mind of these men and uses them as his ministers ... in order that we who hear them may know that it is not they who utter these words of great price, when they are out of their wits, but that it is God himself who speaks and addresses us through them.”

²⁴ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 23. Ancient societies attributed the behavior of some *mantis*, or intermediaries to possession, (ecstasy in the religious context), and the recognition of the various terms given to those who prophesy in various cultures (e.g., prophet, shaman, seer, witch, sorcerer, medium, diviner, mystic, priest), draws some parallels with the Asian and African cultures.

²⁵ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 24. Aune quotes R. Martin and H. Metzger on the treatment of Greek Religion, 15-16, to demonstrate the sensitivity of the importance to sacred shrines of local consultation oracles and the distinctive natural feature which embodies the oracular potencies of the site. This emphasizes the tremendous significance of sacred places in various religious systems. Aune also states that Plutarch also mentions that all men are potentially prophets.

established practice as observed in the Jewish Old Testament, as a principle for determining Jehovah's will. This is the reason why the early Jewish apostles made use of the practice to choose Judas' replacement: "So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, 'Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.' Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles" (Acts 1:23-26).

The following text also demonstrates Israel's use of this divining procedure to obtain the Lord's will for the choice of a scapegoat: "He is to cast lots for the two goats — one lot for the Lord and the other for the scapegoat. Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the Lord and sacrifice it for a sin offering" (Lev 16:8-9). Joshua also employed the same process in determining the allocation of land portions as inheritance for the various tribes of Israel. As the men started on their way to map out the land, Joshua instructed them:

"Go and make a survey of the land and write a description of it. Then return to me, and I will cast lots for you here at Shiloh in the presence of the LORD." So the men left and went through the land. They wrote its description on a scroll, town by town, in seven parts, and returned to Joshua in the camp at Shiloh. Joshua then cast lots for them in Shiloh in the presence of the LORD, and there he distributed the land to the Israelites according to their tribal divisions (Josh 18:8-10).

The similarity of this ancient process of inquiring of the gods is thus very striking. Religious societies do exhibit a tendency to sometimes be closely aligned with their cultural roots and formation.

The prevalent use of dreams in these ancient Mediterranean oracular phenomena

also align well with one of this thesis' chosen prophetic texts, where dreams are evidenced as a manifestation of the Spirit's outpouring – "Your old men will dream dreams" (Joel 2:28). Additionally, these Mediterranean prophecy versions also do not discriminate on gender grounds, since women were very prominent in these sessions, thus again drawing a parallel with Joel's prophecy. It is also noteworthy that mention is made by Aune that everyone was a potential mantis, quite like Joel stated, and a principle that the apostle Paul seems to agree with in I Corinthians 14:24 and 31, "But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying, they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment by all, as the secrets of their heart are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, 'God is really among you!' For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged" (I Cor 14:24-25, 31). Gordon Fee also uses the same text to offer support for this idea that potentially, any member of the Spirit community could give a prophetic utterance.²⁶

Larry McQueen introduces the utterance of Joel's Spirit outpouring as the catalyst that created the eschatological Israel, the new prophetic community of God, and associates Paul's texts that follow with this community that highlights the ideal of universality and social equality: "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). "Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all" (Col 3:11). These Pauline texts echo Joel's prophecy which stipulates that both genders, along with slaves, and children, all races and social classes, will all equally share in the promised Spirit's outpouring.²⁷

²⁶ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 60, 890, 891.

²⁷ McQueen, *Joel and the Spirit*, 49-51.

Global Spirit Manifestations & Issues

Prophesying in the Asian Context

Having inspected spirit phenomena in the early Church eras, the first three hundred years of the Church Fathers, as well as the ancient Mediterranean look-alikes of the prophesying phenomenon, this article will now briefly survey the Asian landscape in a search for seeming similarities and for possible differences. How do the Asian experiences of the prophesying gift compare to the observed inspired impromptu Spirit utterances of those ancient spirit expressions?

In their book, “Asian and Pentecostal,” authors Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang present their readers with a rather broad picture of the Pentecostal scenes in the Asian continent, through a variety of articles offered by a host of contributors of various academic and denominational backgrounds.²⁸ It is most evident that there were visitations of the Spirit sometime before famed records of Western outpourings. During one such nineteenth century visitation of the Spirit, one record shows evidence of Pentecostal-like phenomena such as “Visions, dreams, prophecies, miracles, persons falling prostrate, and in rare cases, speaking in tongues.”²⁹

In what might be considered the first recorded outpouring in India, in the area of

²⁸ Allan Anderson & Edmond Tang (Eds.), *Asian and Pentecostal, The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011). The book is a compilation of essays by mainly Asian scholars, who present various themes on Asian Charismatic Christianity, followed by descriptions of the phenomenon as observed in nine countries and in three different regions – South Asia, South East Asia, and East Asia.

²⁹ Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 36. Quote from an article by Gary B. McGee, *Pentecostalism*, in Scott W. Sunquist, et. al. (eds.), in a *Dictionary of Asian Christianity* (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans, 2001), 646-650.

Tirunelveli, during an 1860 revival, many were observed as having “great shakings, seeing visions, gifts such as speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy.”³⁰ This revival was also confirmed by a separate source that likewise indicated the manifestation of the gift of prophecy, along with other Spirit manifestations of tongues, and an intense conviction of sin.³¹ The great revival during 1860-75 in the province of Madras also experienced prophesying, tongues and healings.³² The articles compiled by Anderson and Tang also include the famous Mukti revival of 1905 that resounded worldwide, and gave birth to the Spirit’s outpouring in other countries. This is a record of Minnie Abrams’ first-hand account. It is most descriptive, with dramatic manifestations that followed the Spirit’s baptism and fire. Her writings state that there were “healings, speaking in tongues, prophecy, and other gifts of the Spirit.”³³

In the 1930s in China, one man of God by the name of Dr. John Sung was used tremendously by the Spirit in the area of praying for the sick. He manifested the gift of tongues and the gift of the word of knowledge or prophecy. It is stated that during preaching, he would call people out in the congregation and announce their specific sins. In predicting the future (an aspect of prophesying), one profound prophecy of his declared that only after Western Missionaries leave China and funds are stopped, would the Chinese church really move forward (We have seen this fulfilled in our time; China, for

³⁰ Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 37. This was aided by a quote from G.H. Lang, *The History and Diaries of an Indian Christian: John C. Aroolapan* (London: M.F. Robinson & Co., 1939), 198-99.

³¹ Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 175. The reference was taken from A.C. George, *Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore, South India*, *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 4:2 (July 2001), 220.

³² Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 51. Many Pentecostal Scholars documented this revival: e.g., A.D. George above, 215-220.

³³ Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 174. From Minnie F. Abrams, *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost & Fire* (Kedgaon. Pandita Ramabai Mukti Mission, second edition, 1906, reprinted 1999), 1-3.

decades absent the influence of Western Missionaries, has the largest number of believers in any one nation).³⁴

Michael Bergunder offers much that is relevant to the history of the South Indian Pentecostal Movement. He mentions that belief among Pentecostals and Charismatics is widespread, that there are nine distinguishable gifts of the Spirit according to I Corinthians 12:8-10, and that one of the prominent ones is prophecy.³⁵ Even though there are personal prophecies, where prophets and prophetesses are involved, the prophetic gift is nevertheless exercised to a large extent by laypeople, predominantly women.

These personal prophecies are mainly generalized (unspecific) statements and are defined as words of knowledge that offer promises of God's help and assurance. They are confined to the areas of healing, conversions, and ministry callings. Some of these personal prophecies would be considered exhortations and words of comfort that would seem to serve a similar purpose as prophetic preaching. The predictive element is rare, with two very noticeable ones that were documented. One was uttered in 1942 that concerned the Japanese war and its seeming consequences to a specific Indian city. Another in 1991 was given to warn Rajiv Gandhi that he should avoid his visit to Tamil Nadu.³⁶ There was severe devastation of the Indian city, and when Gandhi failed to heed this prophecy, he was assassinated during his visit in 1991.

³⁴ Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 39, 40. Information taken from the *diaries of John Sung*, translated by Stephen L. Sheng (Brighton, MI: Luke H. Sheng and Stephen L. Sheng, 1995), 29.

³⁵ Michael Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal Movement in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 146. Bergunder is Professor of the history of Religions and mission studies at the University of Heidelberg. Allan Anderson highly recommends his book as a benchmark in the study of global Pentecostalism.

³⁶ Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal Movement in the Twentieth Century*, 153-154, 172-180.

Anderson and Tang offer more confirmation of the prophecy phenomenon this time during the 1990s in the state of Meghalaya, India, where a revival featured speaking in tongues, healing, prophecy and other spiritual gifts.³⁷ Additionally, during 1965, another revival in Shillong experienced tongues, visions, and prophecy. In 1996, in the city of Yangon, Myanmar, during the worship period on Pentecost Day, the members began speaking in tongues, prophesying, and seeing visions, manifestations that they had never experienced before.³⁸ There is also another account of another revival in October of 1973 that was experienced by a group of students in Bario, East Malaysia, during prayer. Many Spirit manifestations were accounted for, including speaking in tongues, prophecy, and words of wisdom and knowledge. Another one followed this in Ba Kelalan, Malaysia, in 1984-5, where similar Spirit manifestations were experienced, including tongues and prophecy.³⁹

Among the Chinese speaking Christians in Malaysia and Singapore, during the 1980s, there was the rise of the prophetic movement, where personal prophecies were a regular feature during worship services. People were seeking personal guidance through prophecies. This prophetic movement became popular into the 1990s but subsided when an inaccurate one was given to the Anglican Bishop of West Malaysia. This, along with some other questionable issues with the personal prophetic movement caused a negative impact on its popularity.⁴⁰

³⁷ Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 192. From Y. Nongsiej, *Revival Movement in Khasi-Jaintia Hills*; O.L. Snaitang (ed.), *Churches of Indigenous Origins in North East India* (Delhi, ISPCH, 2000), 24, 25.

³⁸ Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 193 & 219. From Prosper Ryntathiang & D. Kitbok Ryntathiang, *The Assembly Church of Jesus Christ (Full Gospel)*, India, in O.L. Snaitang (ed.), *Churches of Indigenous Origins, in North East India* (Delhi, ISPCK, 2000), 67ff.

³⁹ Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 244.

⁴⁰ Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 239, 242, 243.

Something similar occurred in Myanmar, where the prophecies were called *thusuak*, or *sawlina* – commanding individuals to do things. These prophetic movements took place during two periods: 1977-1989, and subsequently from the 1990s and onwards. Seemingly, the Holy Spirit spoke to them audibly, and the general ethos of the movement included the belief that the Bible was insufficient to meet the needs of immediate guidance. Consequently, prophecies were needed to supplement its deficiencies. Inaccurate prophecies were simply interpreted as a test of faith. One Pastor however, rebuked one prophetess who recommended that a chicken's blood be sprinkled on the sick – he knew that the blood of Jesus is sufficient!⁴¹

There was also the “Cleansing-Prophetic Movement” that distinguished itself from other ‘spiritual warfare’ movements in that it operated through prophecy. There could be unclean things in the house, things dedicated to evil spirits, materials used for worshipping spirits, and things in which spirits dwelt. These things hindered the household from prosperity and health, and caused sickness and loss among the family members. The objects would be removed from the house and burnt.⁴² It seems difficult to distinguish between folk Christianity and Pen practices – the indigenous religious beliefs of healing, trance, speaking in tongues, all of which have often been understood as syncretistic elements. There is also similarity with African theology, where traditional cultural values are the main source of a Theology's own understanding and expression.⁴³

⁴¹ Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 221, 222. Reference of Chin K. Khai, ‘Dynamics of Renewal: A Historical Movement Among the Zomi (Chin) in Myanmar’ PHD Dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1999, 280-88; 350-53.

⁴² Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 223.

⁴³ Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 323, 327.

The book “Asian and Pentecostal”, compiled by Anderson and Tang, presents several articles that address this relationship between Pentecostals and indigenous spirit movements. Some Chinese scholars reveal similarities between grassroots Christian practices in China and the traditional folk religions – akin to Daoist popular practices, and exhibiting strong ‘animist’ and shamanist influences.⁴⁴ It also seems clear that the exorcism practice of South Indian Pentecostals has been shaped by the demonology of the Hindu popular religiosity. By using similar Hindu dialect for demons and devils, the theology of evil spirits of popular Hinduism has been formative in the Christian concept of devils - Satan’s underlings. Pentecostals and the Hindu Mantiravati thus seem to profess similar claims.⁴⁵ Additionally, in the Korean Pentecostal culture, Shamanistic elements seem rather easily incorporated into the faith structure of the Holy Spirit. Faith in the Spirit seems to fit and flow well with the indigenous culture.⁴⁶

It is also important to note that the formation of Asian Pentecostalism cannot be divorced from the Asian unique spiritual awareness – its vital supernatural worldview. They go hand in hand with the cultures and religious backgrounds, and thus, a truly indigenous Asian Christianity being supernatural and seriously Pentecostal! The inability to grasp this concept of the Asian supernatural worldview is the reason why the Western interpretation of Pentecostalism fails to fully understand the concept of the multi-dimensional and multi-cultural workings of the Holy Spirit in the Asian context.⁴⁷

Shamanism has affinity with the spirit world. There is the expectation that God, or gods, are involved in the daily lives of humans, and thus respond to their needs like good

⁴⁴ Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 393.

⁴⁵ Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 147, 148, 155.

⁴⁶ Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 27, 29.

⁴⁷ Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 43, 44.

health, good fortune, and blessings. Traditional folk religions have likewise incorporated these beliefs. The Asian mind, being Shamanistic in orientation, lends itself to Pentecostal Spirit manifestations. This mindset greatly aids in the understanding of the overwhelming prevalence observed in the acceptance of the Joel text, and its related prophesying Spirit phenomenon.⁴⁸

As already noted, the Joel text of 2:28, 29 also revealed that the Spirit's outpouring would be groundbreaking in its connection to "all people," bringing women into the anointed sphere of the Spirit's prophesying praxis, which was previously mainly a male domain. In consideration of the historic dehumanization of women in the Asian context, the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy has had a most liberating effect. The 1905 Indian Mukti outpouring with Pandita Ramabai and her school of oppressed Indian women is obviously an outstanding case of the fulfillment of Joel's text.⁴⁹ The great Korean intercessory leader Jashil Choi, associate pastor at the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, Korea, which is pastored by Yonggi Cho, her son-in-law, is another memorable woman who exemplifies Joel's prophetic fulfillment. The establishment of her Osan-ri prayer mountain movement has gained international influence. Also, Korean born Seen-Ok Ahn has also received international acclaim for her Orphanage and prison ministries that spans borders in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines. It is also well established that women ministers form a large percentage of the global Pentecostal movement.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 52, 56-58.

⁴⁹ Stanley M. Burgess, and Eduard M. Van Der Mass, *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervon, 2002, 2003), 1016 -18.

⁵⁰ Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 110, 111, 115.

Prophesying in the African Context

Ogbu Kalu states that contemporary Pentecostalism, even though rooted in older religious revivals, is recognized as another phase of the quest for power and identity in Africa. The African views life in three dimensions, the sky, the earth, and the ancestral or spirit world, where several components of spiritual powers influence all of life's activities. The African worldview exhibits similarities to the Pentecostal worldview where the Spirits' power manifestations also influence human activities, thus a drawing feature of the gospel's power ingredients. For Pentecostals also, there seems to be a kindred atmosphere between the Bible's worldview, and the power themes that sustain even the socio-economic and political structures in the African indigenous religions.⁵¹

African Pentecostalism reconnects with the early church of the New Testament, convinced that a restoration has come just as the Joel text prophesied. It thus links to the early New Testament Pentecostal outpouring, in what might be considered a continuity of the apostles and their faith.⁵² Many of the historic entries show evidence of charismatic experiences such as prophesying, healing, deliverance from demons, and the miraculous.⁵³ The prophetic and revival movements were pivotal to community changes, and the young and women were prominent in these Spirit moves. Records show that there were tongues, prophecy, exorcisms, and night prayer vigils. Certain prophetic individuals stood out, one being William Wade Harris, in whose evangelistic meetings healings and prophecy were very prominent. Another was Garrick S. D. Braide, through whom healing

⁵¹ Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism, An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 176, 179. Kalu was the Henry Winters Luce Professor of World Christianity and Mission at McCormick Theological Seminary. It is comprehensive and groundbreaking in its description of African Pentecostalism.

⁵² *African Pentecostalism, An Introduction*, 7.

⁵³ *African Pentecostalism, An Introduction*, 9.

powers and prophetic utterances were demonstrated. John G. Lake likewise had similar Spirit manifestations of healings and prophecy in his meetings. Ogbu mentions several areas where the modes of receiving and transmitting spiritual power were aligned with Joel's prophecy through dreams, visions, and prophetic speaking.⁵⁴

One unique development in the African context of the Spirits' visitation is the area of 'Dominion Theology,' where signs and wonders, healing, prophecy, and glossolalia, are used both as weapons of spiritual warfare (spiritual mapping), and signs of God's presence.⁵⁵

But the Joel effect also encompassed women who in the African context, were also mightily anointed by the Spirit. The Joel 2:28, 29 text has seen a powerful fulfillment in the gender area where prominent prophetesses and female leaders have been birthed on the African scene, producing such categories as founders, sisters, first ladies, and jezebels.⁵⁶ In this category is Margaret Wangare who founded her own church and is the presiding Bishop of the Church of the Lord. Other mighty women of the Spirit also include Margaret Wanjiru of Jesus Alive Ministries, Teresia Wairimu of Faith Evangelists Ministries, Stella Ajisebutu of Water of the Rock Church, Mercy Yami, and Dorcas Olayinka, who currently is the Archbishop of her church.⁵⁷

Spirit Outpouring at Azusa Street

As previously indicated, the Azusa Street event was the catalyst that ushered COGOP into the Pentecostal experience - its story is thus most relevant to COGOP'S

⁵⁴ *African Pentecostalism, An Introduction*, 35-38, 56, 77, 144.

⁵⁵ *African Pentecostalism, An Introduction*, 253.

⁵⁶ *African Pentecostalism, An Introduction*, 148, 149.

⁵⁷ *African Pentecostalism, An Introduction*, 148, 149.

prophesying praxis. One of the ‘movers and shakers’ of that Spirit outpouring was Charles Fox Parham, the accepted formulator of the “tongues” doctrine as it relates to the Spirit Baptism. He specified that “*glossolalia*” is the only evidence of one receiving the Baptism.⁵⁸ This conclusion was aided by a group study of his students who saw “tongues” as they stated, from the four sections of Acts when the Spirit visited different groups.⁵⁹ His students consequently all sought the Spirit Baptism, seeking the only Spirit evidence of tongues as laid out by Parham. The record states that shortly after midnight on December 31, 1900, Agnes N. Ozman was the first to receive the “tongue” speaking experience.⁶⁰ The other students and Parham himself followed soon after, all claiming to speak approximately twenty different foreign languages.⁶¹ It should be noted that no qualifying scientific or linguistic study exists that justifies the foregoing statement. However, the experience resulted in Parham’s declaration of “*xenolalia*,” and his consequent announcement that Missionaries no longer needed to learn a foreign language - the Spirit Baptism will solve this difficulty for mission fields.⁶²

It is under this teaching that the historic Pentecostal leader of the Azusa Street world famed event W. J. Seymour sat, and subsequently sought and received his own “tongues” experience along with six others on the night of April 9, 1906 at the 312 Bonnie Brae Street Los Angeles location, before the move to the three-year revival address of the 312 Azusa Street location.⁶³ It is to this three-year event that numerous international

⁵⁸ Vinson Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in The United States* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1971), 99. Synan is well regarded as a historian in the circles of the Pentecostal and Charismatic renewal movements. These quotes are from his earliest work on the Azusa St event.

⁵⁹ Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in The United States*, 101.

⁶⁰ Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in The United States*, 101.

⁶¹ Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in The United States*, 102.

⁶² Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in The United States*, 102.

⁶³ Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in The United States*, 106.

believers came and received their Spirit baptism, and then returned to share the news and experience with their national home church community. Others used this as a springboard to take the experience to foreign countries. Consequently, this historic North American Spirit outpouring has been seen by many as one of the main epicenters for the Holy Spirit's global outpouring.

On Cessationism

John MacArthur is a strong voice for the viewpoint of Cessationism;⁶⁴ this article will briefly consider some of his ideas.⁶⁵ One contention he has with the broad Charismatic Movement is the wide spread promotion of the idea that God still speaks today directly to his people, and in a normative fashion.⁶⁶ It has spawned the idea that direct revelation is the main way which is used by God to communicate with his people. Consequently, quite prevalent among these movements is the cliché that “The Lord told me.”⁶⁷ This idea of direct communication by God has promoted a fertile platform for presumptuous prophesying which has led to a culture of inaccurate prophetic words or predictions. It now seems acceptable that modern prophets are expected to be fallible, not infallible like their Old and New Testament counterparts.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Cessationism: The theological position that the spiritual gifts like prophecy, tongues, and healing, were unique to the apostolic era, and consequently when that office ceased to function, the gifts themselves ceased. Supporting this stance is the concept that the apostolic office had the authority to write the Scriptures, and with the completion of the canon, the office itself had fulfilled its function; subsequently, the signs and wonders that confirmed those ministries had likewise served their purpose. Cessationists do believe that miracles of healing can happen today, but in answer to prayer, and not because of someone with a special healing gift.

⁶⁵ John MacArthur, *Strange Fire, The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit With Counterfeit Worship* (Nashville: Nelson Books, 2013). His book will be used for this article. It offers his research on the broad Charismatic Movement, along with the Word of Faith and the New Apostolic Reformation, as breeding grounds for scandal, greed, spiritual chicanery, false prophesying, and errant doctrine.

⁶⁶ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 113.

⁶⁷ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 113.

⁶⁸ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 109.

In continuing his description of the Charismatic Movement and regarding what he sees as a primary problem with modern prophecy, MacArthur offers several examples of prominent Charismatic prophets whose prophetic words are filled with errors and inaccuracies.⁶⁹ Names such as Bob Jones, Benny Hinn, and Rick Joyner are mentioned, along with several of their major prophetic utterances that utterly failed to materialize.⁷⁰ The author expresses his alarm that this prophetic culture of erroneous utterances has seen its ranks grow tremendously since its presumed inception by Charles Fox Parham, to its present powerful sway among mainstream evangelicals. MacArthur additionally bemoans the movement's rather questionable theology, with a foundation that seems based on an exceptional interest in extrabiblical revelations. He declares that the entire movement is "a sham religion run by counterfeit ministers."⁷¹

MacArthur expresses serious concern for this growing need for extrabiblical words from the Lord that has become so commonplace, particularly when these modern prophecies are so often erroneous. He mentions Sarah Young, the popular author of the *Jesus Calling* devotional, who acknowledges that her search for extrabiblical revelation was birthed through a feeling that Scripture was not sufficient; she had a yearning to hear what God had to say to her on any given day!⁷² This, MacArthur points out, is the danger with extra biblical revelation, which he sees as a departure from the fundamental Reformation theological principle of *sola Scriptura*, that the "Bible is our sole, supreme, and sufficient authority."⁷³ He does make a clarifying statement that this does not negate the

⁶⁹ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 111.

⁷⁰ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 109-113.

⁷¹ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 113.

⁷² MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 116.

⁷³ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 116.

fact that God still speaks today, but that source is his authoritative Word, through which God's Spirit gives illumination and not new revelation.⁷⁴

He additionally makes mention of New Age Prophets and famous cult groups like the Seventh-Day Adventists, Mormons, and Jehovah's Witnesses, with their well recorded and undeniable history of false prophetic utterances. When errant prophecy is considered as being one of the distinguishing marks of non-Christian cults or false religions, he does wonder why the Charismatic Movement prophets who acknowledge fallibility, are not seen in the same light!⁷⁵

In chapter seven of his book, MacArthur directs his attention to the prominent 'tongues' issue of the movement. He singles out discredited prophetess Juanita Bynum and her 2011 Facebook posting of what supposedly was a message in tongues, noting that "Bynum's Facebook gibberish serves as a vivid illustration of the so-called tongues that characterize the contemporary Charismatic Movement." He refers to tongues as a defining staple in the movement that is sometimes referred to as heavenly speech, tongues of angels, and a private prayer language, that consist "wholly of nonsensical babble."⁷⁶ He quotes William Samarin's research of various global charismatic groups on the issue of *glossolalia*, in which he states that *glossolalia* seems to be like language in some ways, but fundamentally is not, noting that "When the full apparatus of linguistic science comes to bear on *glossolalia*, this turns out to be only a façade of language."⁷⁷

⁷⁴ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 117.

⁷⁵ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 127-129.

⁷⁶ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 133.

⁷⁷ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 134-135. William Samarin is the University of Toronto's linguistic professor. Quotes are from his book "*Tongues of Men and Angels*" (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 227-28. MacArthur also quotes from the *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion*, and the *Cambridge Companion to Science and Religion*, as support for his contention that *glossolalia* is not a qualified human language.

For Cessationists like MacArthur, the concept that the modern tongues speech of Charismatics fails to qualify as a genuine language is important, because in the understanding of the theology of Cessationism, biblical tongues is a reference to authentic languages - it is “the supernatural ability to speak genuine, meaningful, translatable languages.”⁷⁸ Using the famous Acts 2 text on the Holy Spirit’s outpouring as the touchstone of the tongues issue, Cessationists contend that genuine languages were spoken by the 120 recipients on that day - that was the miracle of Pentecost! Those who received the New Testament gift of tongues on that day were supernaturally enabled by God’s Spirit to instantaneously speak in genuine foreign languages that they had never learned.⁷⁹ In support of this view, MacArthur makes mention of the early twentieth century Pentecostals who understood the phenomenon of Acts 2 to be actual languages that would empower them in their missionary ventures to rapidly advance the gospel.⁸⁰

Though indicating that “the gift of languages was closely associated with the gift of prophecy” (Acts 2:16-18; 19:6; I Cor 14), the church was to prioritize prophecy over tongues. MacArthur unequivocally contends that there is no New Testament basis for modern tongues, which he emphasizes is a learned practice of repeating gibberish, whether done at home via some purported prayer language (an invention of sheer speculation), or “at church during a group session of indecipherable mass mumbling.”⁸¹

⁷⁸ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 138.

⁷⁹ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 136-139.

⁸⁰ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 139.

⁸¹ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 141, 151.

Conclusion

In dealing with the problem of prophesying, this chapter has majored on precedence research; it is an attempt to learn from qualified academics who have published material on this seemingly controversial subject. In its survey of this Spirit praxis, it briefly addressed how ancient practitioners of Jewish and early Christians understood it, along with those of the ancient Mediterranean and Greco-Roman oracular traditions.

To further assist our understanding of this troubling praxis, quotes from the Church's Fathers during the approximately first three hundred years A.D. were drawn on, which seem to indicate that the Spirit's supernatural gifts, including prophesying, were still in operation. These combined sources seem to show that the operation of the gift enabled impromptu inspired utterances informed by the Spirit himself - no notes, no studying, no prior preparation, as is the case for preaching or sermon preparation.

To complement the discussion, the chapter also presented qualified articles on the modern global manifestations of the praxis, concentrating on the Asian and African regions, where well recorded histories of this Spirit phenomenon have abounded. To bring some balance, the opposing view of Cessationism has been accounted for, mainly through its most famous modern proponent.

CHAPTER 3

BIBLICAL & THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

It is a given that the Biblical worldview on this Spirit manifestation establishes the standard for its individual and spirit community operation. This thesis-project about prophesying will thus be invalid, absent this vital aspect of its essential knowledge. This chapter will therefore seek to answer the question about the Bible's position on the issue and the theological perspective it presents on this Spirit praxis that is called prophesying.

In consideration of the tremendous time difference that exists between the prophetic utterances of the original prophets and apostles, and the modern church, it is of critical importance that their utterances be revisited in their historical setting. How did men like Joel and his Jewish peers understand prophesying? Why would Luke record Peter's statement that Joel's famous Spirit outpouring prophecy was fulfilled on that historic Pentecost Day in Acts 2? And what relevance does this fulfillment have for the modern church, particularly in consideration of the centuries that have passed since that early church event? Additionally, what are the primary thoughts of the apostle Paul on the thesis issue, and what, if any, is the difference between the New Testament's understanding of prophesying, and the other oral Spirit speeches of tongues and interpretation?

In addressing these issues, this chapter seeks to establish the Biblical and Theological support, and foundation, for this thesis-project. Scripture being this chapter's pivotal resource, quotes connected to this Spirit manifestation will be presented, as evidence of its nature and function in both the Old and New Testament periods.

The Old Testament and The Prophesying Praxis

In going directly to the source and consulting with Joel's Jewish heritage, one appropriate Old Testament example is found in 2 Chronicles 20. This story lends itself to this paper's discussion, since the prophetic element plays a pivotal role in the unfolding of events. King Jehoshaphat was at his wits end when faced with the vast superiority of the Moabites' and Ammonites' invading armies. His wise decision was to seek divine help through fasting and prayer. Help came in the form of a prophecy through a priest by the name of Jahaziel:

Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite and descendant of Asaph, as he stood in the assembly. He said: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the Lord says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army, for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow march down against them. They will be climbing up by the Pass of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the gorge in the Desert of Jeruel. You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.'" (2 Chr 20:14-17)

This message is uttered only after a special visitation of the Spirit on Jahaziel, who qualifies it as an inspired word of the Lord by his statement, "This is what the Lord says to you." It is a message of encouragement to dispel fear, a word of wisdom giving direction, and a word of exhortation comforting them that the Lord will deliver. It is an impromptu message, given through the inspiration of God's Spirit that met the Jewish nation's need by giving them the needed victory over the dreadful power of the enemy forces. This is most assuredly a Spirit phenomenon that is quite different from, and on a separate plane from a well-studied prepared message that goes with the art of preaching.

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown on this passage mentions that “this prophet is not elsewhere mentioned, but his claim to the inspiration of a prophetic spirit was verified by the calm and distinct announcement he gave, both of the manner and the completeness of the deliverance he predicted.”¹ John Gill thinks he is of some note, since his genealogy is mentioned.² He considers this as an encounter with the Spirit of prophecy from the Lord, for he experienced this phenomenon suddenly, while in the midst of the congregation, while they were all waiting on the Lord. Gill also notes that Jahaziel probably never prophesied before, or, even if he did, prophecy did not come according to the will of man, but by God’s will, as in other instances, when the Spirit of God, like the wind, blows where and when he wills.

Jahaziel’s impromptu Spirit-initiated utterance predicted a supernatural victory that would be obtained over the enemy, for the Israelites will be victorious without having to fight. John Gill sees in this a word that dispelled fear, since it revealed to the Israelite society, that this battle was God’s, not theirs. God would personally handle the overwhelming invading hordes; thus, after resting on the Sabbath, they can go out the following day, with “confidence and intrepidity,” knowing that the Lord will be with them, to “protect them, fight for them, and give them victory.”

¹ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*. S. S. Scranton Co., 1997. PC Study Bible V5, 1988-2008, Complete Reference Library; BibleSoft Registered Trademark. An extensive work from conservative and orthodox teachers of the Christian faith. This commentary has been a bestseller since its original publication in 1871 due to its scholarly rigor and devotional value. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown have crafted a detailed, yet not overly technical, commentary of the Bible that holds to the historic teachings of orthodox Christianity. *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* is based on a detailed exegesis of the scriptures in the original languages. Bible Software.

² John Gill, *Exposition of the Bible*. <https://biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/> [accessed October 7, 2017].

In this Old Testament text that describes the Spirit's sudden visit on the congregation, and his inspiration on Jahaziel that resulted in a spontaneous message, the impromptu nature of prophesying in the Old Testament is immediately recognized. This is not a message dictated to a recognized prophet that is later announced to the people, but an unplanned occasion, when God's people were in dire straits and clearly needed divine intervention if they were going to survive as a nation. This is not the moment when a well thought out sermon is needed, but rather as the text so appropriately reveals, a message of a supernatural nature, a word directly from God's throne room, that could accomplish what the best sermon never could – provide immediate relief through assurance that God is still on the throne, and he is not detached from his people's issues!

Some thoughts on this text, 2 Chronicles 20:14-17, are also presented by the Holman Commentary in the chapter "Choose your friends carefully," and under the caption, "War with nations east of the Jordan river."³ Pleading his case with the Lord for deliverance, King Jehoshaphat admitted the inability of his army to overcome the overwhelming odds they faced. Only Jehovah God could rescue them. This Commentary states that Jehoshaphat received an answer from the Lord, through the Levite Jahaziel, who delivered a word directly from the Lord that the battle was not Jehoshaphat's, but God's.⁴ This direct word from the Lord also contained information of the enemy's exact location, and where King Jehoshaphat's army should position themselves and watch God in action.⁵ The Commentary, in describing this utterance that was the result of the Spirit's visitation on the Levite Jahaziel as "a direct word from the Lord," removes it from the realm of just

³ Winfried Corduan, *The Holman Old Testament Commentary, I & II Chron.* Edited by Max Andres (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2003), 275.

⁴ Corduan, Andres, 277.

⁵ Corduan, Andres, 277.

natural human ability, and thus demonstrates the nature of Old Testament prophesying as an impromptu and spontaneous message through the agency of God's Spirit.

Moses, the 70 Elders, and Sharing of the Spirit's Anointing

The Lord said to Moses: "Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the tent of meeting, that they may stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the power of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them. They will share the burden of the people with you so that you will not have to carry it alone." . . . So Moses went out and told the people what the Lord had said. He brought together seventy of their elders and had them stand around the tent. Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took some of the power of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied – but did not do so again. However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp. A young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses' aide since youth, spoke up and said, "Moses, my lord, stop them!" But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!" Then Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp. (Num 11:16-17, 24-30)

Facing very stressful complaints from the people for meat, Moses seemingly reached a place of burnout. This is suggested by his depressed attitude and statement, requesting God to kill him, since caring for such a large number of people had overwhelmed him to the extent of despair. God's answer to Moses' dilemma was to provide seventy elders to assist him. It is their method of consecration into service that is of interest for this thesis. God would take a portion of the tremendous anointing that was resting on Moses, and share it with these seventy leadership assistants. The text states that when the "Spirit rested on them, they prophesied." Even the two who were absent from the group also experienced the same phenomenon when the Spirit rested on them. Though

the content of their prophesying is not recorded, and even though the experience was temporary, it is nevertheless noteworthy that the sign of the Spirit's anointing presence is the impromptu and spontaneous ability to prophesy.

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Bible Commentary, in describing the Spirit's coming down on Jahaziel, suggests the tokens of the divine presence and operations, as in the gifts and influences of the Spirit.⁶ The elders would be endowed with a portion of the same gifts as Moses had, especially prophesy, which it suggests is "an extraordinary penetration in discovering hidden, and settling difficult things." In consideration of the portion of the text "they prophesied and did not cease," this Commentary states that the seventy elders spoke under divine influence. Additionally, it was originally applied to those who were recipients of divine revelations or were the subjects of divine inspiration, but did not predict the future. The Commentary also suggests that their prophesying could refer to the performance of their sacred and civil duties by the help of those extraordinary endowments they received after the Spirit came upon them.

The Commentary also seems to imply, that since all seventy prophesied, that it is suggestive of an earlier, though weaker Pentecost. This foreshadowing of the Acts 2 Pentecost event that fulfilled Joel's prophecy, could also be implied by Moses' statement, wishing that all the Lord's people were prophets so that God would put his Spirit on them. This was descriptive of Moses' time, when only that category experienced the Spirit's anointing to prophesy, and a veiled reference to the Old Testament period, when this experience was limited to prophets, kings, and priests.

⁶ Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (S. S. Scranton Co., 1997). PC Study Bible V5, 1988-2008, Complete Reference Library; Biblesoft Registered Trademark.

In further consideration of the portion of the text that states “they prophesied and did not do so again,” another Commentary suggests that it be understood generally, and especially here, not as the foretelling of future things, but as speaking in an ecstatic and elevated state of mind, under the impulse and inspiration of the Spirit of God, just like “speaking in tongues,” which followed the gift of the Holy Spirit in the days of the apostles.⁷ It is further suggested that the miraculous manifestation of the Spirit’s enabling the seventy to prophesy gave the nation visible proof that God called, empowered and authorized them as Moses’ helpers.

Samuel, Saul and his Messengers

There are two texts in 1 Samuel that are meaningful to our discussion about the prophesying praxis. The first:

After that you will go to Gibeah of God, where there is a Philistine outpost. As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place with lyres, timbrels, pipes and harps being played before them, and they will be prophesying. The Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person. Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you. (1 Sam 10:5-7)

Samuel previously outlined a series of things that would precede the prophesying encounter that this text indicates that Saul would experience. Samuel is displaying the broad scope of his prophetic office, and the accuracy for which he was famous. This prophetic endeavor would enable Saul to better grasp Samuel’s main prophecy, that aligned with the act of the prophet anointing him as God’s chosen to lead his people. This same

⁷ C. F. Keil, and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996). PC Study Bible V5, 1988-2008, Complete Reference Library; Biblesoft Registered Trademark.

chapter indicates in verse one: Samuel took a flask of olive oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying, "Has not the Lord anointed you ruler over his inheritance?" When Saul experiences the fulfillment of these many signs given by Samuel through the Spirit of prophecy, the expectant result would be his encouragement, assurance of the leadership calling, and an increase of faith. All of this is in agreement with the nature and purpose of prophesying.

His encounter with the group of prophets allows Saul to further experience the powerful atmosphere and phenomena that surround those who interface with the Spirit of prophecy. Consider this portion of the text: "The Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person" (v:6). The encounter with this group, who are accompanied with musicians, does describe a rather powerful and apparent ecstatic form of experience. Saul's Spirit visitation produced a tremendous spiritual transformation, as evidenced in his enablement to prophesy with them, and would further serve to reveal the impromptu and spontaneous nature of this prophesying praxis.

It is also observed that the text does not acquaint us with any evidence of an oral nature, as is seen in similar contexts. It does present an atmosphere of what in modern Pentecostal spirituality would be called "worship and praise," since a band of musicians is so prominent in the text. However, the precise content of this prophesying encounter leaves no doubt as to its ecstatic and impromptu nature for the new inductee Saul. There should be no argument that the type of phenomena envisioned in this text, is not descriptive of the art of preaching!

Gordon, in his Commentary, states that the three signs given to Saul were essentially for his own encouragement.⁸ Paul mentions this as an aspect of the prophesying gift in 1 Corinthians 14:3: The one who prophesies speaks to the people for their strengthening, encouraging, and comfort. As already mentioned, encouragement is an ingredient that was also evident in Jahaziel's prophecy in 2 Chronicles 20:14-17. Gordon in his exegesis states that when Saul encountered this prophetic ensemble, he came under the control of God's Spirit, and joined them in their ecstatic display.⁹ He further asserts that in this context, prophesying "virtually means ecstasizing in the manner of the prophets."¹⁰ He also adds that prophesying, whatever the form relative to an initial manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the early church, could find a comparison with Acts 2:17 (Joel's famous utterance that God's people will prophesy when the Spirit is poured out on them), and Acts 19:6 (where the twelve disciples of John the Baptist, upon receiving the Spirit, spoke in tongues and prophesied).¹¹ Gordon adds an important note to the discussion of the prophesying phenomenon, by providing a comparison between the Israelite and Canaanite prophetic traditions.¹²

⁸ Robert P. Gordon, *I & II Samuel, A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 117.

⁹ Gordon, *I & II Samuel, A Commentary*, 117. Gordon's quote is derived from B. Halpern, 'The Uneasy Compromise: Israel between League and Monarchy,' in B. Halpern, J. D. Levenson (eds.), *Traditions in Transformation: Turning Points in Biblical Faith* (Fs F. M. Cross: Winona Lake, 1981), 63f.; *idem*, *the Constitution of the Monarchy in Israel* (Harvard Semitic Monographs, 25; Chico, 1981), 150f.

¹⁰ Gordon, *I & II Samuel, A Commentary*, 117.

¹¹ Gordon, *I & II Samuel, A Commentary*, 117.

¹² Gordon, *I & II Samuel, A Commentary*, 117, 188. For Gordon, the prophetic group described in the text was representative of an element in the Israelite prophetic movement which distinguished itself by its irrational, ecstatic tendencies. This quote is assisted from Halpern, *The Uneasy Compromise*, 72f. Ecstatic prophets of this sort were inclined to operate in groups which attached themselves to cult centers (*cf. high places*, 5). Samuel was the leader of one such guild according to 19:18-24. While Israelite prophecy is most nearly contiguous with Canaanite prophecy in this area of ecstasy, it can also be said that increased knowledge of the phenomenon of prophecy in the ancient near east, leaves little room for the view...that Israelite prophecy was derived from the Canaanite model and was merely ecstatic in origin.

Keil and Delitzsch, in their reference to the third sign that Saul was to experience, declares that right where Israel's enemies, the Philistines, had established their military post, the Spirit of God was to come on Saul, and empower him for his regal office.¹³ Concerning the issue of the group of prophets prophesying, the understanding is an ecstatic utterance of praise to God, similar to the seventy elders in Moses' time. Whether it was in the form of a song or passionate speech cannot be precisely determined, but it surely was something very energetic. Relative to Saul, God's Spirit was to pass on the same enthusiasm to him, so that he would, in a similar manner, prophesy like them, experiencing a transformation that was to lift him out of his narrow earthly sphere, and into a higher one, befitting of his kingly calling.

The following is the second relevant text from I Samuel:

Word came to Saul: "David is in Naioth at Raman"; so, he sent men to capture him. But when they saw a group of prophets prophesying, with Samuel standing there as their leader, the Spirit of God came on Saul's men, and they also prophesied. Saul was told about it, and he sent more men, and they prophesied too. Saul sent men a third time, and they prophesied too. Finally, he himself left for Ramah and went to the great cistern at Seku. And they asked, "Where are Samuel and David?" "Over in Naioth at Raman," they said. So, Saul went to Ramah. But the Spirit of God came even on him, and he walked along prophesying until he came to Naioth. He stripped off his garments, and he too prophesied in Samuel's presence. He lay naked all that day and all that night. This is why people say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Sam 19:19-24)

It is of interest to note that there is a three-fold experience visited upon Saul's messengers, reminiscent of the three signs he received in 1 Sam 10. Again, the powerful influence of the Spirit of prophecy is demonstrated, this time on messengers of the king. This is amazing, and could be interpreted as a form of God's Spirit being made available

¹³ C. F. Keil, and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996). PC Study Bible V5, 1988-2008, Complete Reference Library; Biblesoft Registered Trade-mark.

to all people, not only to a select group. It also demonstrates the powerful influence of this anointing, and the nature of the prophesying praxis. All three groups had mainly one thing on their minds – David’s capture! Their journey was not with a revival in mind, or a special visit to the prophet of God for a divine encounter. Imagine the transforming experience that visited them when the Spirit of prophecy came upon them!

When consideration is given to Saul’s own encounter with the Spirit of prophecy, it must be remembered that he was still contending with an evil spirit that God sovereignly permitted to visit and plague him. Still controlled by an evil mindset, God’s Spirit broke through this demonic barrier and overwhelmed Saul even before he set foot on the prophet’s hallowed ground. Stripping himself of his royal robes, he submitted to the group in their all-night prophesying meeting! Samuel the prophet was in charge, not King Saul! Irrespective of the precise content of their prophesying, under no circumstance could this qualify as an all-night ‘preaching’ engagement. It is all Spirit initiated and impromptu. It is a spontaneous work of the Spirit of prophecy that helps with the understanding of the Acts 2 Day of Pentecost outpouring that Joel promised. God’s Spirit has been making prophetic waves long before the New Testament era. There is an undeniable thread of evidence!

Gordon compares the two ecstatic displays by a band of prophets that Saul experienced, by indicating how the first one, in 1 Samuel 10:5-13, served as a sign of his election, while the second, in this text of I Samuel 19:19-24, serves only to confirm that God has rejected him!¹⁴ Additionally, the same mysterious power that confirmed his election,

¹⁴ Gordon, *I & II Samuel, A Commentary*, 164.

now visits his messengers, and all three of them “have collapsed in ecstasy.”¹⁵ Saul personally sets out to investigate. His visit shows that “he is even more susceptible to the mysterious influence than are his messengers.” In Saul’s case, his nakedness under the power of the Spirit of prophecy, serves to indicate that he no longer possesses the dignity and authority of a king. “The divine Spirit, which was supposed to be the cachet of a king, is actually operating in the interests of his rival.”¹⁶ Keil and Delitzsch Commentary notes are attached.¹⁷

The Prophesying Praxis & the Potential for Error & Deception

Jeremiah & Prophetic Counterfeiters

This Spirit manifestation has always been an area that has attracted counterfeiters, zealous to be God’s mouthpiece. Jeremiah encountered strong opposition from such a group:

“Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord. They keep saying to those who despise me, ‘The Lord says: You will have peace.’ And to all who follow the stubbornness of their hearts they say, ‘No harm will come to you.’ But which of them has stood in the council of the Lord to see

¹⁵ Gordon, *I & II Samuel, A Commentary*, 165.

¹⁶ Gordon, *I & II Samuel, A Commentary*, 165.

¹⁷C. F. Keil, and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996). PC Study Bible V5, 1988-2008, Complete Reference Library; Biblesoft Registered Trademark. Saul alone lay there the whole day and night with his clothes off, and in an ecstatic state of external unconsciousness; whereas the ecstasy of his servants and the prophets lasted only a short time, and the clear self-consciousness returned earlier than that of Saul. Saul and his messengers, the zealous performers of his will, ought no doubt to have learned, from what happened to them in the presence of the prophets, that God had the hearts of men in his power, and guided them at his will. They were also to be seized by the might of the Spirit of God, which worked in the prophets, and thus brought to the consciousness, that Saul’s raging against David was fighting against Jehovah and his Spirit. Saul was seized by this mighty influence of the Spirit of God in a more powerful manner than his servants were, both because he had most obstinately resisted the leadings of divine grace, and also in order that, if it were possible, his hard heart might be broken and subdued by the power of grace.

or to hear his word? Who has listened and heard his word? I did not send these prophets, yet they run with their message; I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied. But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people and would have turned them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds. I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name. They say, 'I had a dream! I had a dream!' How long will this continue in the hearts of these lying prophets, who prophesy the delusions of their own minds? Let the prophet who has a dream recount the dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. For what has straw to do with grain, declares the Lord. Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces? Therefore, declares the Lord, I am against the prophets who steal from one another words supposedly from me. Yes, declares the Lord, I am against the prophets who wag their own tongues and yet declare, 'The Lord declares.' Indeed, I am against those who prophesy false dreams, declares the Lord. They tell them and lead my people astray with their reckless lies, yet I did not send or appoint them. They do not benefit these people in the least, declares the Lord." (Jer 23:16-18, 21-22, 25-26, 28-32)

This is another classic case of the eagerness to be God's mouthpiece, that presents such a challenge to the prophesying praxis. It is the seeming readiness to give assurance that all is well, and that God is always in the business of prospering his people. In this text from the prophet Jeremiah, these counterfeits contend with the Man of God, that they have received the true message from God, and are therefore authorized to speak for him. In this battle of information and its source, God himself enters the discussion and forthrightly states that these counterfeit prophetic voices have never been in his counsel chamber, and consequently, have never been privy to hear his will. This text quite plainly speaks to a prevailing problem that is associated with the prophesying phenomenon – the abandoned eagerness to be God's mouthpiece, that leads so often to the declaration of one's own inner thoughts. It is an area of spirit speech that is fraught with the possibility for deception and error, just as in Jeremiah's days.

The Holman Commentary states that these false prophets were "speaking their own thoughts rather than those from the Lord, and that Yahweh classified them as being

“obstinate, headstrong, and inflexible.”¹⁸ God contrasts himself and his ability to reveal his will with the false prophets who claimed that power. Even though these deceivers exerted influence over the people with their claims of dreams and insights into God’s mind, their oracles were just statements of “their own words and opinions.” God finalized his claim to ultimate authority, in declaring that those who deceive his people through their false prophesying will undoubtedly face his judgment.

“They give out the thoughts of their own hearts to be divine revelation, and promise peace and prosperity to all stiff-necked sinners.”¹⁹ This Commentary wonders, that if by prophesying falsehood, are these prophets attempting to make men forget God’s name? For those who prophesy, the challenge always is, “have they been in God’s counsel?” Since these would-be prophets have not, they seek legitimacy three ways: by stealing words from each other, by saying “the Lord says,” and by feigning revelations by means of dreams.

The Balaam Paradigm

The Old Testament book of Numbers relays this prophet’s story to us.

Now Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites, and Moab was terrified because there were so many people. Indeed, Moab was filled with dread because of the Israelites. The Moabites said to the elders of Midian, “This horde is going to lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field.” So Balak son of Zippor, who was king of Moab at that time, sent messengers to summon Balaam son of Beor, who was at Pethor, near the Euphrates River, in his native land. Balak said: “A people has come out of Egypt; they cover the face of the land and have settled next to me. Now come and put a curse on these people, because they are too powerful for me. Perhaps then I will be able to

¹⁸ Holman, *Old Testament Commentary*, 216-218.

¹⁹ C. F. Keil, and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996). PC Study Bible V5, 1988-2008, Complete Reference Library; Biblesoft Registered Trade-mark.

defeat them out of the land. For I know that whoever you bless is blessed, and whoever you curse is cursed.” The elders of Midian left, taking with them the fee for divination. When they came to Balaam, they told him what Balak had said. “Spend the night here,” Balaam said to them, “and I will report back to you with the answer the Lord gives me.” So the Moabite officials stayed with him. God came to Balaam and asked, “Who are these men with you?” . . . They came to Balaam and said: “This is what Balak son of Zippor says: Do not let anything keep you from coming to me, because I will reward you handsomely and do whatever you say. Come and put a curse on these people for me.” But Balaam answered them, “Even if Balak gave me all the silver and gold in his palace, I could not do anything great or small to go beyond the command of the Lord my God. Now spend the night here so that I can find out what else the Lord will tell me.” That night God came to Balaam and said, “Since these men have come to summon you, go with them, but do only what I tell you.” (Num 22:2-9, 16-20).

This story arouses a fair amount of curiosity, due to the main character involved, Balaam son of Beor. He seems to command a good amount of respect in the prophetic arena, yet it is noticed that the “fee of divination” is offered – there is a sizeable reward attached to his services. This record is confirmed in Numbers 24:1, “Now when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he did not resort to divination as at other times, but turned his face toward the wilderness”. Jude confirms this (Jude :11), “Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam’s error; they have been destroyed in Korah’s rebellion”. Peter also adds his support in 2 Peter 2:15, “They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Bezer, who loved the wages of wickedness”. His business is his seeming ability to “bless” or “curse.” It appears that he had some sort of a track record, enabling him to attract the attention of the Moabite king.

It is also noticed that he gives the air of spirituality: “I will report back to you the answer the Lord gives me.” This presents a similar air of spirituality that Jeremiah’s false

prophets exemplified in their catch phrase, “The Lord told me.” The intrigue is heightened when God communicated with him, as this text indicates, and additionally, when God’s Spirit comes on him and gives him several amazing pro-Israel prophecies, which are contained in chapters twenty-two and twenty-three of the same Old Testament book of Numbers. However, chapters twenty-five and thirty-one reveal that this is the same man who used his prophetic ability to influence the Moabite women to lead the Israelite men into sexual immorality and idolatry that elicited God’s judgment, leading to the deaths of 24,000 of them. Apparently, he could not overcome the temptation of greed. Balaam thus serves as a master-mold, the prototype, of the prophesying praxis, and its potential for error and deception.

Green, in his comments, links Balaam with Cain and Korah, because of the “archetypal nature of their sin, the way these sinners influenced others, and the judgment that they suffered.”²⁰ He charges Balaam with ‘deception,’ but also indicates that “heretics who have followed their (Cain, Balaam, and Korah) behavior and will, as a consequence, suffer the judgment that they endured.”²¹ Green further notes that Jude focuses on Balaam’s greed since he practiced his art strictly for gain, but he also mentions the other aspect of his error, which was “his agency in enticing others to engage in sexual sin.”²²

²⁰ Gene L. Green, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Jude & 2 Peter* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2008), 87. Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein, Editors.

²¹ Green, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Jude & 2 Peter*, 88.

²² Green, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Jude & 2 Peter*, 91. Green takes this sexual aspect from Num 25 concerning the Moabite women, and Num 31:16, where their tactics were attributed to “Balaam’s advice.” Balaam is accused of practicing divination (Josh. 13:22). Tradition knew him as a diviner (Philo, *Moses* 1.48, 264-65); he became known as a false teacher (Josephus, *Ant.* 4.6.6, 126-30).

In his exposition of Peter's address of the Balaam paradigm, Green states that Peter singles out Balaam, thus he "compresses the triple denunciation of Cain, Balaam, and Korah from his source, Jude :11."²³ Green acknowledges that though Peter retains the traditional denunciation of greed, he does not emphasize Balaam's penchant for error which this greed motivated, but instead, that he "loved the wages of unrighteousness." Thus, those who leave the path of righteousness, and prophesy for gain, now follow the archetypal example of Balaam.²⁴

There is an interesting aspect to this Balaam's saga that will be briefly addressed. It deals with a Jewish family and their personal association with some of Balaam's prophecies. Naphtali Lavie mentions this association with a portion of this prophet's utterances.²⁵ He speaks of his father's annual reciting on the Sabbath of his birthday, of Balaam's prophecy: "O my people, remember what Balak, king of Moab devised, and what Balaam, the son of Beor answered him; So that you may know God's righteous acts" (Micah 6:5). His father was recounting the curse of the Holocaust and the blessing of the Jewish State's renewal.

Lavie also quotes another of Balaam's prophecies that replaced curses with blessings: "It is a people that shall dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations. No enchantment can be against Jacob, and no divination against Israel. This is a nation that rises like a great lion and lifts itself up as a young lion" (Num. 23:9, 24-28). He mentions

²³ Green, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Jude & 2 Peter*, 284.

²⁴ Green, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Jude & 2 Peter*, 283, 284, 286. Great sinners were considered to be disciples of Balaam. As *m. 'Abot* 5.14 says, the "disciple of Balaam" is one who has "an evil eye, a proud soul, and a haughty spirit." Additionally, Green also suggests that Peter has in mind more than a mere rebuke but implies that a legal charge was laid against Balaam. Like the heretics, he was in clear violation of God's law in going out against Israel. It's ironic, Green states, that this charge was laid by Balaam's own ass!

²⁵ Naphtali Lau-Lavie, *Balaam's Prophecy* (London: Cornwall Books, 1998), ix, x.

that their family name, Lavie, means lion, and that the story of his father's life is Balaam's prophecy fulfilled. His father thus wanted the English translation of his book to be named *Balaam's Prophecy*, vs the Hebrew title, *A Nation as a Lion*, words of the Aramean prophet Balaam, who was recognized as prophet and sorcerer of his period, as Naphtali Lavie states.

Balaam thus serves as a powerful case study of the intrigues of the prophesying praxis that this thesis seeks to address. This obviously very troubled prophet, who had an audience with God, did utter genuine impromptu, spontaneous Spirit prophecies, that held promise and blessing for the nation of Israel. His true nature however, was that of a sorcerer, a soothsayer; thus his recognition as the fountainhead of prophetic counterfeits, steeped in error, greed, and deception.

A Brief New Testament Survey

Joel 2 & Acts 2: Foundational & Theological Discussion

The famed Pentecost event of Acts 2 is essential to this discourse. It serves as the fulfillment and explanation of the Spirit outpouring event in Joel 2:28, 29, and the qualifying link of the prophesying praxis between the Old and New Covenants.

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to **speak in other tongues** as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem, God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, **because each one heard their own language being spoken**. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? Then **how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?** Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene, visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – **we**

hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” (Acts 2:4-11; *bold emphasis mine*).

In direct fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy, these approximately 120 individuals were prophesying, being used by the Holy Spirit to declare God’s wonders to several nationalities in their own native languages. Spontaneous impromptu declaration of a message from God consequent to the Spirit’s anointing – no premeditation, preparation, or study, as is the primary case in preaching. The apostle Paul further helps in this understanding, when he makes the case for the connection between the gifts of prophecy and that of tongues and interpretation:

Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified. (1 Cor 14:1-5)

Here, Paul qualifies these Spirit gifts, and gives prominence to the prophesying gift over just the Spirit speech of tongues, unless this tongues message is interpreted, thus benefiting the congregation. But, in so doing, the apostle indicates the equivalence of tongues and interpretation to prophesying – this is relevant to this thesis-project, as it is very applicable to the understanding of the praxis in the COGOP.

In Acts 2:9-11, Luke provides a rather comprehensive list that covers most of the Jewish Diaspora across the Roman Empire and Parthian Empire.²⁶ The text also mentions proselytes, Gentile converts to Judaism. Even though most of these would have spoken

²⁶ *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011), 2083.

the common Greek language, they nevertheless had their own native language, in which they heard the 120 speak under the Holy Spirit anointing. Verses 6, 8, and 11 clearly indicate that it was not unknown tongues, but authentic languages that were spoke on that memorable day. This, according to Peter, fulfills Joel's prophecy of prophesying which he said would happen, when God's Spirit is poured out on all people groups. Paul confirms this in 1 Corinthians 14:1-6, where he encourages the Corinthians to pursue love, earnestly desire spiritual gifts, but especially to prophesy vs speaking in unknown tongues, since the former speaks to people in their own language, while the latter is a mysterious Spirit communication directly to God, that lacks human understanding. This is obviously the reason why the Spirit anointed Peter to quote Joel, and not Isaiah! Peter, in quoting Joel, emphasizes twice in verses 2:17 and 2:18, that all flesh will prophesy, and a qualified hermeneutics and honest exegetical exercise of the text will surely point in that direction.

Joel declared that the eschatological Spirit outpouring would result in recipients prophesying. Peter confirmed Joel, and additionally emphasized this on Pentecost Day, by adding another "they shall prophesy." No such double confirmation is given to dreaming and seeing visions. Since Joel declared that prophesying would be a direct result of the Spirit's outpouring, then what was experienced on Pentecost Day in Acts 2 was prophesying, and this consequently would qualify both the tongues speech, and the understanding of what was spoken.

Luke and Paul

Mark Ruthven's input is now germane to this discussion of these oral Spirit manifestations.²⁷ "When Luke describes the process of being filled with the Spirit, charismatic utterance of some type is the norm. This is based on the consensus understanding from his time that the presence of the Spirit was essentially the presence of prophecy and power."²⁸ Ruthven asks, "How does one know it's the Spirit?" According to him, the "utterance gifts" are manifested.²⁹ What seems consistent to this author, concerning the Spirit's visitation on people in the book of Acts, is that they 'speak.'

Ruthven also mentions the idea of visible and audible signs by his reference to Acts 2:33, "what you now see and hear," and reinforcing it by the reference to Peter's double mention of "they shall prophesy," in Acts 2:18, an addition to Joel's prophecy about the outpouring of the Spirit.³⁰ He suggests that in so doing, Luke is including "tongues" under the rubric of prophecy, and additionally, his account of the Spirit's coming on John's disciples in Acts 19:6, is also described in terms of oral manifestations: tongues and prophecy.³¹ In Ruthven's view, there is a very close association between the Spirit and his "words in the mouth," representing the foundational motif of Acts, based on its programmatic prophecy of Isaiah 59:21: "As for me, this is my covenant with them, says the Lord. My Spirit, who is in you, will not depart from you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will always be on your lips, on the lips of your children and

²⁷ Jon Mark Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata, The Protestant Polemic on Post Biblical Miracles* (Tulsa: Word & Spirit Press, 2011). Ruthven is Professor Emeritus, Theology, from Regent University School of Divinity.

²⁸ Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata*, 190.

²⁹ Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata*, 190.

³⁰ Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata*, 191.

³¹ Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata*, 191.

on the lips of their descendants – from this time on and forever, says the Lord.” Ruthven sees the Spirit-speech connection as “the central fulfillment of this prophecy.”³²

In his article on the prophetic, David Peterson states that much of the discussion on the issue pays attention to Paul’s writings, which majors on the character and function of prophecy in a congregational setting. However, he contends that in the New Testament times, a broader perspective of the subject is offered by events in the book of Acts.³³ Concerning the Act 2 Spirit outpouring event, Peterson declares that the sermon of the apostle Peter “is clearly programmatic for Acts,” prompting us to be alert to signs of the Spirit’s presence, particularly for “prophetic activity” in the spirit community.³⁴

Peterson mentions the gathering of the prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch, where the Holy Spirit said: Separate for me Barnabas and Saul, for the work to which I have called them, Acts 13:2. He describes this prophetic activity as one when the Holy Spirit spoke through one or more of the prophets that were present at the event. In his interpretation of the Acts 19:6 Spirit encounter with disciples of John the Baptist when “the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied,” Peterson sees as an engagement in prophesying, and suggests that their prophesying experience was being compared with the Acts 2 Day of Pentecost event.³⁵ He further allows for several prophesying references in Acts 21:4, for instance, where the disciples at Tyre

³² Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata*, 191-192.

³³ David Peterson. *Prophecy and Preaching in Acts*. Fellowship of the Word and Spirit site. Published Article. <https://www.fows.org/publications/post/prophecy-and-preaching> [accessed October 13, 2017]. He sought to propose a link between prophecy and preaching in the early church. He mentioned that the fact of the Spirit’s presence and operation as the Spirit of prophecy, is a sign of the dawning of the new age or messianic era. Peterson, at the time of the writing of this article, was principal of Oak Hill Theological College, London. He was previously head of the department of ministry at Moore College, Sydney, NSW, Australia, lecturing in New Testament, Christian worship and pastoral studies.

³⁴ Peterson, *Prophecy and Preaching in Acts*, 2.

³⁵ Peterson, *Prophecy and Preaching in Acts*, 3.

were urging Paul “through the Spirit” not to go on to Jerusalem. He contends that in this reference, even though it is not specifically labeled as prophecy, there does not seem to be a better way to explain the experience.³⁶

Grudem thinks that one of the essential factors for prophesying to be considered as genuine is a revelation from the Holy Spirit.³⁷ He uses the following texts to justify his statement:

But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying, they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment by all, as the secrets of their hearts are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, “God is really among you!” Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace – as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people. (1 Cor 14:24-25, 29-33)

Grudem contends that those who prophesy are evidently revealing the secrets of strangers’ hearts, and the strangers themselves by their submission, indicating that God is in their midst, since that’s the only way private issues of the heart could be revealed.³⁸ He believes that Paul is linking prophesying to a revelation from the Spirit in v. 24 and v. 25 of the text. Additionally, Paul, in bringing order to the operation of these speech gifts of the Spirit, states in v. 30, that if a “revelation” comes to another prophet, the others should be quiet, and allow him to speak. Grudem indicates that this links a “revelation” to prophesying.³⁹

³⁶ Peterson, *Prophecy and Preaching in Acts*, 3.

³⁷ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 113.

³⁸ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 114.

³⁹ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 114.

Likewise, when Agabus prophesied future events in Acts 11:28, and 21:10-11, these predictions had to be based on revelations given to him by the Spirit.⁴⁰ Grudem also takes note of Luke 22:64, that the men who were guarding Jesus after his arrest, having blindfolded him, mockingly told him to “Prophesy! Who hit you?” Added to this list is the High Priest Caiaphas, who in John 11:51, “prophesied” about Jesus’ death for the Jewish nation and for all of God’s children, to make them one.⁴¹ This demonstrates the revelatory nature of prophesying, since Caiaphas could not have known this except the Spirit allowed him to.

Grudem also considers Timothy’s experience with the prophetic. The first text is 1 Timothy 1:18, where Paul states: “Timothy my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well”. Though the contents of the prophecies are not given, their purpose obviously was to encourage this young minister in his spiritual warfare, through the possible development of gifts he was probably unaware of.⁴² In 1 Timothy 4:14, where Paul seems to reinforce the previous text, he states: “Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you”. For Grudem, the phrase “through prophecy” indicates the means through which the gift was given.⁴³

He concludes that “the uniqueness of prophecy is found in its dependence on revelations. If there are not revelations, there are no prophecies. Its purpose is to strengthen,

⁴⁰ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 115.

⁴¹ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 116.

⁴² Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 133.

⁴³ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 134.

encourage, and edify the church.”⁴⁴ Finally, Grudem uses other sources to differentiate between prophesying and preaching.⁴⁵

Hill refers to Paul’s statement on the prophesying phenomenon in Rom 12:4-6 as a grace gift or charisma, to be exercised “in proportion to our faith.”⁴⁶ This, he believes, could be a reference to one’s prophetic ability, based on their faith, or confidence that God’s Spirit is speaking in the actual words being spoken. The one who prophesies therefore, should do so only when confident that God is speaking through him.⁴⁷ Hill quotes 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21, where Paul cautions: “Do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophesying, but test everything.” This, he states, is another text that witnesses to the existence of the prophetic phenomenon in the Church, adding that it is the prophecies that are to be tested, not the prophets.⁴⁸

Conclusion

There seems to be a strong case for the Biblical and Theological Foundation of prophesying as a genuine Spirit praxis.

The examples of Prophesying taken from the Old Testament do seem to show a praxis that is a Spirit-influenced phenomenon, manifested in an impromptu, spontaneous manner. Though its manifestation always signifies the Spirit’s presence, at times it seems

⁴⁴ Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy*, 116, 132, 133.

⁴⁵ Michael Harper, *Prophecy: A Gift for the Body of Christ* (Plainfield: Logos, 1964), 120 – 121. Harper is a British Anglican charismatic. A preacher usually prepares, speaks and expounds from the Word of God. But a prophet speaks directly under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. And from American Episcopalian charismatics Dennis and Rita Bennett, *The Holy Spirit and You* (Eastbourne: Logos, 1971), 108-109: Prophecy is not “inspired preaching.” In preaching, the intellect, training, skill, background, are involved and inspired by the Holy Spirit. Prophecy, on the other hand, means that the person is bringing the words the Lord gives directly; it is from the spirit, not the intellect.

⁴⁶ David Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), 119.

⁴⁷ Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 119.

⁴⁸ Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 119.

to be the sign that the Spirit has specially chosen a vessel. Many examples appear to demonstrate its purpose in strengthening, encouraging, and comforting the believing Spirit community.

The New Testament examples also show similarities to the Old, where revelation and spontaneity seem to be essential ingredients. The New Testament however, does broaden the phenomenon's activities, with the elements of tongues and interpretation as being equivalent. The features demonstrated do also allow for a differentiation from preaching.

The consensus of the two Testaments seems to be an imperative for the case of the Biblical and Theological Foundation of prophesying as a genuine praxis of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DESIGN

Introduction

From various academic studies, it seems obvious that there is a problem with prophesying as it encounters an atmosphere of diverse practices and understandings within the global Christian community. The target group for this ministry praxis investigation being the Church of God of Prophecy, it is essential that a practical inquiry be conducted into specifically how this Spirit speech has manifested during this institution's existence.

The Project Design Chapter is considered the 'nuts and bolts' of addressing this problem of prophesying, as it presents the methodology used to provide the raw material of the COGOP organization's praxis of the prophesying phenomenon. Even though the COGOP organization offers a limited record of its long history, portions of these writings are relevant to this thesis. Records of its historic gatherings are contained its "Assembly Minutes," and these will be consulted for applicable material to this thesis problem.¹ This research will also be applied to include certain individuals of this Spirit community who indicate that they have an acceptable level of experience in the exercise of this Spirit speech praxis.

Additionally, interviews of certain established and knowledgeable COGOP leaders will be conducted, employing questionnaires and surveys where applicable, to provide

¹ *Cyclopedic Index of Assembly Minutes and Important Business Acts 1906 -1974* (Cleveland: White Wing Publishing House, 1975).

the data needed for proper evaluation. The views of these well informed and qualified officials are relevant and meaningful, and hopefully, will enable an outcome and conclusion to this thesis-project that will be beneficial to the COGOP organization, and the general Spirit community.

Research Methodology

Thesis-projects generally need a suitable method of collecting relevant data that would enable meaningful research and evaluation of the chosen subject. Of the various tools used to collect data, the Qualitative Data Collection Analysis method seems appropriate to the purpose of this thesis. This method functions to comprehend narrative, with the goal to bring clarity to someone's beliefs, or their account of an issue.

The Qualitative method presents some optional tools within its group, and after careful analysis, the semi-structured interview seems most suitable to this thesis-project. This interview method contains predetermined questions on its list, but allows for the essential element of flexibility to deviate. This would enable the researcher to ask certain additional questions, necessary for obtaining more pertinent information. This flexibility is paramount, since the researcher has a personal focus, and needs this extra amount of control to steer the interview in that focused direction.

Basic Questionnaire

The initial tool of this Semi-Structured Interview will be a basic questionnaire, items (1-11 below), through which COGOP'S prophesying praxis can be fleshed out. Permission will be requested of the interviewees to audio tape the interview session.

1. An Investigation of COGOP’S Prophesying Praxis.
2. The Organization’s Historical Neglect in the Manifestation of the Prophesying Gift.
3. An Evaluation of COGOP’S Dependence on Tongues & Interpretation as a Pivotal Decision-Making Tool.
4. The Biblical and Theological Soundness of the Prophesying Praxis.
5. The Spirit Community’s Academic Considerations.
6. An Evaluation of the Modern Praxis of Both Aspects of the Spirit Manifestation; Prophesying, and Tongues and Interpretation.
7. Benefits Associated with the Manifestation of These Spirit Gifts.
8. Negatives Associated with These Spirit Gifts.
9. The Lack of a Corporate Discernment Methodology That Would Serve to Effectively Evaluate These Oral Spirit Manifestations.
10. The Need for a Corrective Measures Standard That Would Assist A Corporate Discernment Methodology.
11. Consideration of COGOP’S Biblical Doctrine & Polity Committee’s 1996 Report on the “Leadership Gifts” of the Apostolic & Prophetic Ministries.

Primary Interviews

Adrian L. Varlack

Adrian L. Varlack is COGOP'S resident and accomplished Historian.² His insight into the Church's International Assembly gatherings are greatly valued, and the information provided will meaningfully assist in determining what was possibly the major form that this Spirit-speech of prophesying manifested as a praxis in the COGOP'S gatherings.

Following a short conversation on the thesis subject, the Interview commenced:

Wharton: Tongues and Interpretation has had a major part in our COGOP history, at times seemingly influencing the decision process.³ Can we chat on this; and was any official stance taken on this? (Item #3: Tongues & Interpretation as a Decision-Making Tool).

Varlack: I've read where A.J. Tomlinson said that we did not settle issues by the means of messages and interpretation.⁴ Obviously in the minutes, in the earlier history,

² Varlack, Adrian L. Interview with Compton D. Wharton. Personal interview. Chattanooga, September 28, 2017. Bishop Varlack is the author of *Foundations, Church of God of Prophecy, Concise History, Polity, Doctrine and Future* (Cleveland: White Wing Publishing House, 2010). He is COGOP'S current Historian. His ministry spans a period of over 50, during which time he served in various leadership capacities, including Presiding Bishop, Administrative Assistant to the office of the International General Overseer, CBL Instructor, and International Director of COGOP'S World Missions.

³ Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit, 1901-2001, 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 118. After January 1908, glossolalia appeared in practically every service that Tomlinson observed in the churches. Tongues, interpretations, and prophecies became so prevalent that major decisions of the general assemblies were taken in accordance with charismatic directions brought forth by tongues and interpretations.

⁴ Lillie Duggar. *A. J. Tomlinson* (Cleveland: White Wing Publishing House, 1964), 157. In his annual address before this Assembly (Tenth, 1914), A. J. Tomlinson warned against practicing anything contrary to the theocratic form of government, which honors God and the Scriptures in the final settlement of any matter in question. . . .the only thing that this body of noble men and women demand is a "Thus saith the Lord," or the Scriptural proof, and, "It seems good to the Holy Ghost and to us." Duggar's record comes close to Varlack's possible reference.

there were several instances where the minutes recorded that in fact, once a period of speaking in tongues and interpretation had come, that settled the issue. But a little later it seems like there was some disfavor, because I know folks begin to judge who was giving the tongues, and whether there was someone worthy enough to give the interpretation. But that is there in our history. On adopting our first stance of divorce and remarriage, it is recorded that the one who spoke in tongues came up to the clerk and said, that what Brother Tomlinson had given, was what had come in tongues: A message in tongues; there was a silence; then the message, “It is settled.”⁵ And this was the 18th Assembly in 1923. That is what settled it. We formed a practice later of saying basically that these things were researched by godly men under the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

On the issue concerning the General Overseer’s annual election, the practice had been of selecting him at the end of each assembly for the next year, until 1914. It was then that two brothers on the floor of the Assembly made the point “Well it is obvious the Lord’s hand is upon him, why are we revisiting this every year?” The Assembly accepted their recommendation, and there is a record in the minutes that there were messages and some interpretations confirming the decision.⁶

Wharton: And tremendous demonstration.

Varlack: Yes, Yes!

⁵ Church of God of Prophecy, Business Guide, *Recommendations and Practices Adopted by the General Assembly* (Cleveland: White Wing Publishing House, 1993), 44. Revised through 1992. Another message flashed down, then the interpretation: “Have I not chosen thee to guide this people! Will they not listen! I will shew thee if thou wilt draw close to me.”

⁶ *Cyclopedic Index of Assembly Minutes*, 51. Minutes of the 10th Annual Assembly, held at Cleveland, TN, November 2-8, 1914. One spoke in tongues and the interpretation followed immediately. “My beloved, you can’t do better than what you have. Hold on to what you’ve got.” A second message was given and the interpretation followed. “He has been so faithful, as he was led by me and has governed and led the little flock. So, follow him as he follows me.” People laughed, shouted, cried, danced. . . . M. S. Lemons spoke: “I think you can all see that God’s approval is on this selection. And I don’t see any use of ever saying anything more about a change.”

Wharton: You were going to introduce an article on prophesying (# 1: An Investigation of the COGOP’S Prophesying Praxis).

Varlack: The article is under the subject “The Gift of Prophecy,” in the New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, from page 999 to 1012. There would be aspects of this that our church would not fit with, from the point of view that we did not practice that gift in some of the ways it is rendered here.⁷ But, it has the background from the prophetic speech in the ancient world, all the way through the modern times in the way some of the gifts are perceived, and some of the other traditions of Pentecostalism beside that of our own.

Wharton: There are those who would look at the gift of prophecy as mainly preaching, others as an equivalent to tongues and interpretation, thus the two schools. Most Pentecostals and Charismatics are on record viewing prophesying as a spontaneous Spirit manifestation, equivalent to tongues and interpretation, like Paul talks about it.

Varlack: Exactly! That the Spirit prompts!

Wharton: The word is spoken without it being preceded by a message in tongues.

⁷ Stanley M. Burgess, Van Der Mass, and Eduard M., International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements (Grand Rapids: Zondervon, 2002, 2003), 1003-1006. Under the heading “A Lukan Perspective,” the article mentions the Acts 16:16-18 incident of Paul and Silas confronting the slave girl who worked by divining, or fortune telling. The comment states that Luke is obviously in agreement with Paul. Prophecy needs to be tested, since some oracles, even those that appear to be acceptable, or of truthful content, can be demonically inspired. While false prophecy or divination comes from other spirits, genuine prophecy comes from the Holy Spirit (thus a reference to the supernatural nature of the gift). Reference is then made to two incidents of genuine Christian prophecy: Acts 11:27-30, Agabus’ prediction of a famine, and Acts 21:10-14, Agabus’ warning to Paul of problems he would face if he goes to Jerusalem. Acts further shows that Peter and Luke understood the breadth that is possible in prophetic speech, with the alignment of Joel (2:28-29) as being fulfilled through tongues-speech. Luke agreed with Peter and the long-standing picture of the OT, that prophecy at its most basic level, is nothing less than inspired speech given by God through an individual. Additionally, the Dictionary states that Paul, by showing a complementary relationship between the gift of Prophecy and Discernment of spirits (1 Cor 12:10; 1 Thess 5:20-21), and that of the complementary relationship of the gifts of Tongues and Interpretation, is indicating a supernatural plane of operation, quite unlike that of preaching. Consequently, in consideration of COGOP’S historic stance aligning the gift of prophecy with preaching, Varlack’s comment indicating disagreement with some aspects of the Dictionary’s article on the ‘Gift of Prophecy,’ is quite understandable.

Now, my thesis has both applications, because research looks at different aspects. I think that in our COGOP history, there is an absence of prophesying, that is, a “thus sayeth the Lord” without any tongues; we have majored in tongues and interpretation. So, have we got statements qualifying our view of that aspect of prophesying that it is mainly preaching? Is that our stance?

Varlack: Well, it is in most of our historical writings including some that I just gave you. It is more forth-telling than foretelling.⁸ I have not found this documented in any place, but there have been references to people saying that someone prophesied over them. Other than that, our church never really majored on the sort of statement that Paul made to Timothy about the gift you receive by the laying on of hands by the Presbytery, and so, concerning the transmission of gifts in that way, we do not have a history of that.

There has been the occasion of a person who someone prophesied over that they would become a preacher, leader, or something like that, and sometimes it was referred to by parents over a child that there is something special about that child, and things about that nature. That would be the closest we came to appreciating prophetic utterances that were spontaneous, not preceded by tongues, and even in the sense of what we called

⁸ Bible Training Institute, *Know Your Bible Series, A Study Course of the Church of God at Corinth* (Cleveland, TN). Under the headings: “The Pre-eminence of Prophecy over Tongues,” and “Comparison and Contrast of Prophecy and Tongues,” 99-101. The gift of “prophecy” has to do with especially inspired ‘preaching’ of the already written Word as given by God through His holy prophets. Concerning “tongues,” it is evident that he is speaking of the supernatural gift by which a language is spoken. . . Such “speaking in tongues” is by the power of the Spirit, rather than by the ability of the speaker, who has studied and learned to speak a language other than his own. Paul promotes the value of “edification” (especially of the church), in his exposition on tongues versus prophesying (verses 3 and 4). Therefore, prophesying, or preaching, is of primary importance. “Prophecy” speaks to men; it edifies them; it exhorts men; it comforts men. “Tongues” speak to God, and the speaker edifies himself (verses 4 and 28). When tongues-speaking is genuinely of God, it will serve this purpose; otherwise it would be pointless. There is the exception where God intends the tongues to be interpreted. The hearers are thereby edified in their own language. Paul persists in emphasizing the superiority of prophesying – preaching, for understanding and spiritual edification. In its continuation, the article again mentions prophesying as inspired, anointed preaching and teaching.

discernment. We have never really developed any principles of practice with regard to how something is discerned and then identified.

Wharton: That's a reference to numbers 9, and 10 of the Questionnaire.

Varlack: The lack of corporate discernment. Yes!

Wharton: The need for a standard; corrective measures. We don't have anything like this, and I think that it is vitally important.

Varlack: Yes!

Wharton: Consider our own little history in COGOP. If a decision has been made and you agree, you might get happy talk in tongues to show that the Lord approves it. If you don't like it, you also talk in tongues, and give a word!

Varlack: Be careful my children!

Wharton: Tread softly!

Varlack: It becomes kind of a social phenomenon of a way to exercise, and channel influence. In other words, if we use it and we say it is God, who is going to challenge God. If the other side uses it and they say it is God - somebody at some point needs to say it is not God! I am thinking too on this question of discernment; it falls within the 1 Corinthians 14 discussion that Paul had about people listening and having another judge what was said. The question of judgment; who should judge what would validate a message or prophecy as coming from the Lord and so on, if it is a public prophecy for the church. What Paul was trying to regulate it seems to me, was within the context of the public service of the congregation.

Wharton: "Let the prophets speak two or three and let the others judge." He was probably meaning that the other prophets or elders need to judge this.

Varlack: Exactly! But we have never developed - other than when we make a polity or doctrinal decision in the assembly; and we now have what we call assembly counselors. They comprise of basically the seven Presbyters. That's more-or-less what it morphed into, because it didn't begin with that, but kind-of morphed into that, once they were on hand as a group that they were more-or-less the senior leaders in the senior positions of our church, and therefore it should fall to them to make those kinds of decisions.

Wharton: Along with the General Overseer.

Varlack: Yes! Basically, he would appeal to them, and as moderator, he would more-or-less stay somewhat neutral, and let them say. If he appeals to the counselors, then their words become the last word as to what goes.

Wharton: Now, a word on COGOP'S prophesying practice.

Varlack: It has not been either predominant or consistent in terms of a practice as such. It has cropped up at times in our history, but we have never developed it as any kind of a standard accepted practice in any particular way.

Wharton: Neither for nor against.

Varlack: Exactly!

Wharton: Now, #2 (The Organization's Historical Neglect of the Manifestation of the Prophesying Gift). I think what you have said during our discussion here, properly explains that. Not a historical neglect in that sense of looking at prophesying or its function as an equivalent to tongues and interpretation, but just that the church has never gone in that direction.

Varlack: Exactly!

Wharton: Item #3 (An Evaluation of COGOP'S Dependence on Tongues &

Interpretation as a Pivotal Decision-Making Tool). I think you have done a good job on explaining that too.

Varlack: Yeah. But in the earlier years, I would say that it could be defined that the church leaned more on the first generation. But then starting in the twenties, with the more formal structures being brought in 1920, there was a declaration, then in 1921 there was the adoption of the constitution both of which were formal documents, that began to add structure to, in a way to reregulate some of what had occurred before, under the most spontaneous way of operating.

Wharton: #4: The Biblical and Theological soundness of the prophesying practice. I found that the folks who look into New Testament prophesying as being spontaneous, impromptu messages by the Spirit, really tend to look at it from the Old Testament point of view. These were Jews who were acquainted with prophesying in the Old Testament days, and the New Testament era didn't change that. My research shows that Paul's view had to be conditioned by his Jewishness – that's what he was used to as a Jew, prophesying in the Old Testament. Prophets would preach, but they would also get certain messages from the Lord just suddenly, "This is the Word of the Lord," that wasn't preaching in that sense. So, on the Biblical and Theological soundness of this prophesying praxis, what sort of comment would you have?

Varlack: I would take it from the middle. I find that the folks that were Cessationists who have now encountered the Spirit, and could not now deny the reality of Spiritual Gifts. For example, people like R. T. Kendall, him and two other men, they that have written from the middle. Theologically speaking, because they were on the Cessationist side, then they came over to the Pentecostalist side, I would say that they have a

word for the churches today on both sides, to also the Cessationists, who follow the people from the Reformation, mainly the Calvinists.

Wharton: The MacArthur type.

Varlack: Right; he is extreme. I know he believes in the Spirit alright, but he has a real limitation on his concept of tongues. I am thinking that these men have a word on even helping Pentecostals come to a more balanced view, because they are now on the other side. In my view, the soundness of it, which I think is a good theological soundness, the biblical soundness; I think the biblical mention of it in the New Testament is clear and not cloudy at all. I think that some of the theological takes on it have clouded it up, but it's there.

Wharton: #5: The Spirit Communities Academic considerations; balance is needed.

Varlack: Yes, Yes!

Compton: I have addressed the Academic Community in (chapter 2). It's called precedence.

Varlack: Yes. In fact, I've read Wayne Grudem's work on Systemic Theology. Kendall recognized in Grudem a sensitivity to the Spirit, and to me that's where the Lord is trying to take us now; to really help us see all of us together in our own ignorance; because I've got blind spots, the other guy has got blind spots, and some of us don't want to have any disposition to get the blindness erased, but we know that it is there.

Wharton: #6: On the evaluation of the Modern Praxis of both aspects of the Spirit Manifestation. I mentioned both aspects - prophesying, and tongues and interpretation as equivalents, and not the issue of formal preaching.

Varlack: Yes, I agree. I don't know if you raised this point in any other of your chapters with regard to COGOP position on "no one owning gifts."

Wharton: No, I've not touched on that.

Varlack: That may be one aspect that the Spirit can make use of us, by us not taking ownership to the manner in which he uses us. That may be a worthy point to note because to me, that was like a balance against those who basically assume that they have been used now, so now they are the gift, and they own it. So, they can take it from place to place and use it at will. I think that the church saw in the work that our brothers did on this in 1996, a need for some caution, in that respect.⁹ So, COGOP talks about the gifts having been given or restored, and the balance I see Paul bringing to that is the motive of love, 1 Corinthians 13.¹⁰ Without that as your motivation, it is going to get out of hand.

⁹ COGOP, *Minutes: 89th General Assembly* (Cleveland, White Wing Publishing House & Press, 1996), 35-37. COGOP'S Biblical Doctrine & Polity Committee's 1996 Report on the "Leadership Gifts" of the Apostolic & Prophetic Ministries. Functional aspects of the apostolic and prophetic ministries in modern times (not offices), should be recognized in the church today. What we have today is the function of a prophetic ministry, in a general prophetic role to comfort, console, warn, and used in the gift of prophecy (Acts 13:1; 11:28; 21:8-11).

With regards to Apostles & Prophets, Tomlinson himself stated, that "We have teachers (too many, for some are false teachers), pastors, evangelists, and prophets to a slight degree, but no apostles are known yet. There is no doubt there are men living who will develop into apostles, but no one can palm himself off on us as an apostle who is not, for the unmistakable signs will prove him the same as the sign of tongues proves the baptism with the Holy Ghost," A. J. Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict* (Cleveland: White Wing Publishing House, 2011), 87-88. Tomlinson changed his position concerning apostles and prophets in the Church. In his address to the 26th Assembly in 1931, he said, "The apostles and prophets were the foundation and we are the top of the building, with the structure almost finished. Why should we want to leave off building or finishing and go back to the foundation? We have no desire to take the place of the apostles," A. J. Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict*, 164. Also, *Historical Annual Addresses, Vol 2* (Cleveland, White Wing Publishing House & Press, 1971), 127.

In his address to the 38th Assembly in 1943, he stated, "Paul explains that God gave apostles and prophets for some of the work of perfecting. I take the meaning of Paul to be that the apostles and prophets have done their part of the work, acts, and writings, long ago, whose instructions are to be obeyed. Then there are the evangelists and pastors and teachers (1 Cor 12:28, Eph 4:11). I think these are living now. . . And it is supposed that the evangelists, pastors and teachers put us into this perfect state by their instructions and teachings," A. J. Tomlinson, *The Last Great Conflict*, 164. Also, Lillie Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson*, 753.

¹⁰ Among the prominent teachings of COGOP is one, titled, "Full Restoration of the Gifts to the Church." This teaching first appeared in the list "Teachings Made Prominent" (Important Bible Truths) in the Minutes of the General Assembly, 1912. The apostle Paul lists several of these gifts, and admonished at least three congregations on their operations within the Church (Romans 12; I Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4). He also alludes to them in other Epistles. Taken from an article written by Adrian Varlack entitled,

Wharton: #7: Benefits associated with the manifestation of these Spirit Gifts.

As COGOP’S Historian, and from the scriptural aspect also, just briefly touch on how we benefit when these gifts are manifested. Could you remember anything that was outstanding at any time in your life that really touched you in your spirit? How beneficial was the message itself?

Varlack: I did experience one, during a leadership decision in a local church, with national figures present. The overseer had been removed from office and there was some division in the church over him being removed, and he had taken an active role in resisting his removal. I saw, what we would call just a plain faithful sister, who never displayed or espoused to have any gifts, but was used **of** the Spirit. She said, “This is a morning of decision.” Using a string – a small rope, she tied part of it up to the middle of the rail at the altar and then went down the middle of the church with it, and said, “Today is the day for whoever is going to go with the Lord or who will go with this brother.”

He happened to come in around that time, and he had some very belligerent remarks to make. I saw him step out of that church, because no one was lining up with him so-to-speak; he stomped out of the church through the door. It happened so that door opened to the street, and when he stepped out in that rage outside the door we heard the screeching of the tires; it was a car that barely got stopped before it killed him. I was there! It was clear that this sister was under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Wharton: No tongues preceded. Just a prophetic move or demonstration.

Varlack: Exactly! No tongues whatsoever. The time for decision had come.

“Full Restoration of the Gifts of the Spirit within the Revived Ekklēsia.” The Article was emailed to me by Bishop Varlack on September 9, 2017.

There is another incident I clearly remember. Similarly, there were no tongues and interpretation, but this was the manner I felt that the Spirit was dealing with me, about an issue that was of grave importance to COGOP'S future. This incident happened during the 1990 General Assembly, and is footnoted.¹¹ Varlack then spoke of a Relational Discipleship program that has been sitting around, and how it took this long for this church to accept the difference between our structured way of operating, and the relational principle that was being taught way back then. The subtitle of one is Leading as Jesus Lead - that is Relational Leadership; then Relational Formation; then Relational Discipleship. Consequently, this (the Thesis on the prophesying issue) could be a beginning. We have a little habit of taking 30 or 40 years to accept things. Then we say, oh, you know that was right!

Wharton: Thanks Bishop Varlack for the generous use of your time, and the tremendous historic information given on COGOP'S belief and method of praxis of this problematic Spirit gift of prophesying.

Andrew Husbands

Andrew Husbands offers much practical experience in this area of the prophetic ministry. Coupled with the fact of his personal knowledge of COGOP'S historic method

¹¹ They had a section in the Committee's Report that dealt with setting up a pledge; a pledge that he (Bishop Murray, interim General Overseer) would have to agree to, and every General Overseer after him would have to agree that basically, they would not change this church; it will remain as it is. Personally, Varlack said, "I encountered that when they gave us two or 3 pages of their report." Varlack revealed how troubled he was over this, that he could not sleep that night. The next day of the Assembly he approached the Chair of the Committee, on his knees, to request that this section not be introduced, but was informed that the process had already entered that phase. In all his years at the Assembly, he never opposed the Committee's recommendations, but, feeling that strong urge to do something, he spoke to the Assembly about not accepting this section that would bind all future General Overseers. The Assembly agreed, and the section was removed. Varlack sees this as a definitive prophetic move of the Spirit, that empowered him to bring this needed change to the COGOP body.

of this Spirit gift's manifestation, his insights are consequently of great value to this thesis-project.¹²

Wharton: We do have an issue in this area in COGOP, where we do look on prophesying as preaching. However, if someone prophesies spontaneously, they are not told to shut up.

Husbands: There is the teaching that is labeled the full restoration of the gifts to the church, and included in it would be prophecy, except that my understanding in my early days of COGOP and subsequently, is that we look at prophecy not as not foretelling, but as forth-telling. I think that it is Gruden, or Fee, who speaks about the prophetic unction that accompanies the preacher, in which a person under the anointing of the Holy Spirit speaks forth prophetically while they are delivering a message. Those same two Academics, along with Carson, have added that there is a definite distinction among New Testament prophecy and preaching and teaching, and that the New Testament does not really support a theology that says that preaching is prophesying. These are renowned New Testament scholars, who posit that prophecy is not preaching. I also wrote those words for something in a Gordon-Conwell paper.

So, in that regard, there is a disconnect between COGOP'S doctrinal stance or their practice, or praxis, and the New Testament's praxis. What we find as you study the New Testament theology, is that there is an identifiable prophetic gifting; people are recognized in the New Testament for prophesying as prophets. Agabus, the daughters of

¹² Husbands, Andrew A. Interview with Compton D. Wharton. Personal interview. Washington, October 21, 2017, via the "Zoom Video Conference" internet technology. Andrew Husbands' International Ministry experience spans a period of four decades. He also is a Pastor, Center of Praise & Worship, Washington, DC; Business Owner, AAH Consultants, Architects & Engineers; International Bible School Teacher, and a current fellow DMin student of the Global Pentecostal Track, GCTS, Boston, MA.

Phillip the evangelist, and there were other instances in which these people were prophesying, as against preaching. The COGOP'S praxis based on the research that I have done, is two-fold. Over the years, tongues and interpretation of tongues have been regarded as the prophetic, and secondly, just this supernatural intervention while in the delivery of the word of God (a sermon).

Wharton: We have briefly covered #1 & #2 (An Investigation into COGOP'S Prophesying Praxis, and Its Historical Neglect).

Now, about some comments on #3 (An Evaluation of COGOP'S Dependence on Tongues & Interpretation as a Pivotal Decision-Making Tool).

Husbands: In my research of the history, specifically to the pre-1923 phase or period of the COGOP and especially with regards to the move of the Spirit in the General Assemblies, the impression that is given, is that Bishop Tomlinson in his articulation of theocratic government, sought consistently for tongues and interpretation to accompany any significant decisions that were to be made by the church. As a matter of fact, even when Tomlinson was first elected as general overseer for life, it was through a tongue and interpretation - a prophetic utterance.

Wharton: Tongues and an interpretation; that is being precise.

Husbands: Tongues and interpretation which basically confirmed his place in the body. His argument in 1923 was significant in the sense that other than the legal stuff, one of his crucial positions was the forsaking of theocratic government, the way the 1922 and 23 Assemblies were carried out, in which tongues and interpretations were forbidden in the business sessions of the Assemblies. So, in terms of the praxis, the church has relied on tongues and interpretation as a measuring rod of God's seal of approval. So, while

the spontaneous prophetic is not normal in COGOP, tongues and interpretation of tongues are, which I say, equals prophecy.

There is confusion when there is a similar situation as I witnessed on my first visit to an International Assembly in 1981, in which there was discussion on which bible should be adopted by COGOP. There were basically two competing camps, and what was significant is that you had tongues and interpretation of tongues to support both camps. So that gives one cause for pause; if the same fears we express about the prophetic operation in our midst should not be there as we look at such examples of tongues and interpretation.

I have over the years looked at the move of the Spirit of God at Pentecost, and the Bible says they started to speak in tongues as the Spirit gave the utterance. There are two things about that incident that are commended to us as we look at the impact of the prophetic. One is that Peter basically said that what happened on the day of Pentecost was in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, that your sons and your daughters will prophesy and your young men and so on. It is significant that Peter used prophecy, in the in-braking of the Holy Spirit, and that he alluded to the fact that the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. Several scholars look at Acts 2 as the direct opposite of Genesis 11, the reversal of Genesis 11, for in Genesis 11 you have the Lord confounding language while Acts 2 it's the opposite.

The second aspect I want to highlight is the prophetic nature of the Pentecostal outpouring. We Pentecostals are our own worst enemies, because over the past 100, 120 years we have majored on *glossolalia*, the tongues evidence with its problems, when in fact, if we do a holistic approach to the whole move of the Spirit, the movement of the

prophetic, or the involvement of the prophetic becomes a very important part.

These points I would like you to emphasize; one of the points the church and the cessation group miss; if I am talking in a strange language, and we both speak English, to us it is tongues, but if I am speaking in Spanish, to a Spaniard in my audience, I am prophesying. This aspect is totally missed. So, when Peter said that this is what was spoken by Joel the prophet, he was 100 % right, because to the nations that were there, they were hearing prophetic words in their own language that these Galileans were speaking about the wonderful works of God. Another aspect of the prophetic I think that is overlooked is the whole cessation debate in which such a great percentage of the evangelical church and reform theology basically ascribe to this idea that the prophetic has ceased, although the spirit still works. The only gifts active are preaching and teaching. One wonders if in some of the Pentecostals circles there isn't what I call convenient Cessationism, in that what we don't agree with, or don't understand we say that is stopped.

Wharton: Some of us have an appearance of being closet Cessationists! Incidentally, I have written on aspects of that in my 2nd chapter, where I mention that it is not just *glossolalia* but *xenolalia*, for if it was just tongues, or unknown tongues, the Spirit would have had Peter to quote from Isaiah 28, and not Joel. So, we should consider the implications, that since the Spirit said that the tongues speech of Acts 2 fulfilled Joel's utterance of prophesying, then *xenolalia* is prophesying, even though Joel did not mention tongues.

Husbands: Yes, they were prophesying.

Wharton: They were prophesying, through the vehicle of genuine languages.

Husbands: As a matter of fact amongst the Cessationists, the reformed and evangelical rebuttal to speaking in tongues, to *glossolalia*, is that Acts shows that people understood the tongues that were spoken. There is a group that feels that if your tongues cannot be understood, if you are not speaking in a language that is perceptible to somebody in the building, then it can't be of God. There is no biblical evidence to support that.

Additionally, people are apprehensive of somebody just standing up and saying that this is what God is saying to you. It looks a lot more religious if there is a tongue and an interpretation, as against a person just getting up and saying "Thus sayeth the Lord." The people who are involved in the prophetic advise that we don't say "Thus Sayeth The Lord," because it can convey that import that it has equal weight or equal footing as scripture. There is a fear factor that is involved, which has led to a lot of questioning and apprehension with regards to the operation of the prophetic gift, not just in COGOP, but in a lot of other places.

I remember in Nigeria, I was teaching on prophecy, and there were many there who called themselves prophets. In Africa the prophetic anointing is regarded as the most important anointing for anybody to have, because the prophet is speaking for God. So, consequently, there is this concept that the prophet is the one who instructs the other ministries. It is a wrong concept. Instead of the prophet being a part of five-fold ministry, it is regarded higher.

Wharton: There is tremendous prestige associated with it.

Husbands: Yes! There is prestige and authority. So, you find that there is a coveting of the prophetic office whether the person is a genuine prophet or not.

Wharton: We cannot afford to ignore the negative aspect of prophesying, be-

cause it has always been around, from since biblical times, and it is not going away. It is one of the serious signs of the last days that our Lord and Paul talked about.

Husbands: Beware of false prophets! It's a fact! There are false prophets, and that's one of the reasons why you have churches like COGOP that are very leery of the prophetic.

Wharton: Also, Assemblies of God, Church of God, those classical Pentecostal organizations.

Husbands: What is significant though, and I am certain that you would have read Bill Hammond's series of books, and the thing is the way he contextualizes the prophetic, he looked more in the restoration motif, than just a continuation motif. However, Pentecostals are learning that a lot of the things that we thought had died never really did. It is just that the powers that be: the people in charge of the printing presses and the media highlighted a different thing. There are people who have been prophesying consistently over the years, even in COGOP globally – the majority nations, there is a healthy manifestation of the prophetic ministry, but they have not been regarded seriously.

My study and experience have been that there is sound theological basis for the prophetic. 1 Corinthians 14 makes the point that we should covet to prophesy; we should not forbid it.

Wharton: That is a significant statement!

Husbands: Ruthven's thoughts are commendable with regards to the prophetic, and I find Fees' assessment of the prophetic in his book (*God's Empowering Presence, the Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul*), to be also decent. Grudem, at the end of the day he makes the right conclusions.

The point I am making is, the Spirit has consistently worked. He has been here, and the fact that the church has refused to acknowledge his presence does not mean that he has stopped working. I think as it relates to COGOP, which is where your thesis is, what I found is that as you said in the opening, people don't shut you down once there is a prophetic word. What I find is that people start looking around to see if we believe that.

Wharton: Well, we have not been His councilor and His word is forever settled in heaven.

Husbands: That is true.

Wharton: By the way, we have covered #1- #8, but could you look at #7 (Benefits associated with the manifestation of these Spirit Gifts), and speak a little on that.

Husbands: We spoke a little about it from 1 Corinthians 14. I think it is Ernest Gentle, who speaks about the gifts, of the importance of the prophetic among us, and the blessings. The problem is, when we think of the prophetic, we are still thinking predictive prophecy as against the gift of prophecy, and the office of the prophet. In my teaching on the prophetic, I talk about the Spirit of prophecy, the gift of prophecy, and the office of the prophet.

Wharton: This could relate a little to #11 (COGOP'S 1996 Biblical Doctrine & Polity Report).

Husbands: There is prophetic preaching that has its place, but all preaching is not prophetic, and all prophecy is not preaching, and that's the distinction that needs to be made. There is a revelational aspect of the prophetic which is transformative, and that is when you talk about the benefit. There is an aspect of the prophetic that releases us into new things. People talk about a 'now word', that's the jargon, or a 'conforming word', or

a ‘releasing word’, and in that jargon what they are saying is that the prophetic can tell you about what is going on, so that it releases you into your future. Or it can explain your past, bring out your past so that you are understanding your present, so that you can live victorious.

I suppose the point about its usefulness and its impact, goes back to Old Testament prophecy. There is not that much difference between Old Testament and New Testament prophecy. There is this emphasis over the past 30 years or 40 years on personal prophecy, which is an American thing that has spread world-wide that has really skewed the prophetic gifting in a way that gives people pause. However, looking at Old Testament prophecy, the prophetic anointing was more evangelical and confrontational than it was predictive, and in our present circumstance, that aspect of the prophetic needs to be emphasized more, and in a real sense, prophetic preaching accomplishes that task more than the “thus sayeth the Lord” prophetic pronouncements. And so, while we recognize that in COGOP there is this emphasis on preaching, the prophetic aspect that coincides with that is the prophetic voice; God’s prophetic voice to the church and to the nation.

So, in terms of the benefit of the prophetic, both in terms of fore-telling and forth-telling, there is a need for the church corporate taking on a prophetic mandate in the sense of speaking the word of God into the life of our communities. In a real sense, I am finding that this is absent in our present climate where the only word of God that is being spoken by the church into our present community climate is gays mustn’t get married, and abortion must not happen.

Wharton: Yes. The prophetic message is limited.

Husbands: The church's prophetic mandate must also speak to the other social issues, and that's where the beneficial aspects are not being realized. It is significant, that what we see is that instead of the prophetic benefiting the people, the present climate is a reversal, in that the prophetic is operated as a means of personal benefit for the prophet. I find it strange about this elevation of the prophetic; there is this tension between the genuine, authentic prophetic and the charlatans, the hirelings.

Wharton: Incidentally, for the Biblical and Theological Foundational chapter, I did use II Chronicles 20 with Jahaziel and Jehoshaphat, that famous prophecy, because it is one of the best in the Old Testament. It tells us what prophesying is all about, word of wisdom, word of knowledge, nothing predictive about their future, but revelatory about where the enemy is, so don't go there, and it brought tremendous comfort to them. It is a prime example in the Old Testament of prophesying, and serves to set the stage for the New Testament praxis.

Husbands: You use the word comfort. Paul in 1 Corinthians 14 tells us the purpose of prophecy is to bring edification, comfort, and revelation – significant aspects.

Wharton: Incidentally, it is Grudem that said if there is no revelation, there is no prophesying. He mentioned that as one of the foundational principles of prophesying.

Husbands: Then it should have revelation included. Old Testament prophets had an amazing responsibility; they were to speak and write words which had absolute divine authority – a “Thus sayeth the Lord.” You see the revelational aspect of the prophetic is serious, and this is where it can go past, present and future, and it is the revelational aspect that not just authenticates, but what brings release. You also mention the need for corrective measures and standards that will assist in corporate discernment (#9 & #10).

Wharton: Don't throw out the baby with the bath water. We know we have issues with this prophesying praxis, we have problems, but we are not going to stop prophesying, we are not going to become Cessationists. What can we introduce to bring healing, to introduce a shalom effect to benefit the Spirit community with this gift?

Husbands: I think more than anything else, teaching is needed. If you want healing, teaching is an integral part of healing. In fact, to discover counterfeit, teach them what truth is!

Wharton: You teach them the genuine.

Husbands: The problem however, is that so much of what is around and calling itself the prophetic, is not genuine. How can you have those people teach about genuineness of the prophetic, when what they peddle is not what is genuine!

Wharton: It is amazing and very significant how Jesus dealt with this issue of false prophets and false prophesying. He just said by their fruit you shall know them. We need to develop the genuine, because that is the only way we can highlight what is right, and consequently expose the wrong. And confirm this praxis with the fruit of the Spirit!

Husbands: I make a joke wherever I am teaching about the prophetic that one of the things, one of the important pastoral teaching tools should be to provide a copy of the didache to each of its members and each of its leaders.¹³ And the simple reason why I say that, is because of what the didache speaks about in terms of discerning genuine versus false, or fake. Back in the second century the thing that really hurt the community of believers was greed and wrong motive. I am finding that people are prophesying, making

¹³ The *Didache* (teaching or instruction), an anonymous document, supposedly of the mid-second century, among other things, about basic guidance on how to detect true from false apostles. It is not recognized as Canonical.

statements that claim to be prophetic to elevate their status, and to ensure that they are financially well rewarded and these sort of things. How do you protect the church and the nation from false prophets? Manifest what genuine prophecy is!

About discernment, I think that Stephen Parker started something that I don't know if it has been developed properly, because in a real sense even in Academics, there is not a lot on discernment. The people who are skilled in the prophetic, skilled in the discernment of spirits and so on. During my prophetic seminar in Guyana, June 2017, one individual said that they had an instance in which somebody came in from Trinidad and had spoken into their lives and created a whole lot of confusion, and so that is still the danger. There is a very strong apostolic prophetic movement in the Caribbean. Some of them are genuine, but a lot of them are finance driven. What is significant is that people are going after them. There is this witchcraft element in it. It is more soothsaying. I will give an offering and you will tell me my tarot. The reality is, current practice is almost to the place of witchcraft. You go to a prophetic conference because you want to hear a word from God, you go to a conference and join a line, pay a \$1,000 fee, to get a prophetic word.

Wharton: I wrote on this negative aspect in chapter 3; "The Balaam Paradigm."

Husbands: But that is one of the pitfalls of prophecy. It has become a merchandise, and it is highly merchandised in this society, and across the globe.

Wharton: That's why I suggest the Balaam issue. I included an article on him in my last chapter. Academics consider him as being the prototype of all this nonsense.

Husbands: Yes, and that is probably true. In a sense for a reward.

Wharton: This man could not get away from his DNA. All the significant prophecies he did about Israel and the Lord himself, yet this man went back to his DNA of greed.

Husbands: It is important for us to discern the spirit of the prophet even if the words of the prophet are authentic. And that is the warning in Revelation; they followed the way of Balaam who for gain decided this is what he was going to do. Corrective measures include developing spiritual character amongst our people. Developing the ability to discern. The Guyana trip indicated that it gave the pastors and leaders tools to work with. The prophet is subject to the governmental structure of your church, and the pastors and people need to know this.

Wharton: And that is a significant issue to get over to the saints.

Husbands: Yes. The prophet is subject. That means that those who are exercising an eldership function in a local church are the ones who set government. The prophet is not responsible for government in the local church. It is one of the things that we need to teach. Secondly, there is such a thing as prophetic protocol. I make references to instances in my early life, in my early ministry in which I spoke stuff that was true! That came true! It happened. It was authentic. But it hurt the people whom it was meant for, instead of it blessing. The Lord was giving them information, and this is one of the other things, the prophetic is not just informational, it is revelational. And if you are just peddling information you can get that from other sources.

I am looking at #11(Consideration of COGOP'S Biblical Doctrine & Polity Committee's 1996 Report on the "Leadership Gifts" of the Apostolic & Prophetic Ministries). One of the other things that has come out in some of the writings of Bill Hammond,

Lester Sumrall, James Goll, about Ephesians 4, is that the prophetic is not independent. Government in the local church is in the hands of the elders, but the prophetic also releases government, and we need to submit ourselves to the government in the local church, because it can create confusion, splits, factions, and other problems, and that is one of the other reasons why churches like COGOP try to curtail, to limit the prophetic gifting because, you got a word from the Lord and people run with it.

I have said that too many people rely on the prophetic instead of relying on the bible and that is dangerous. Corrective measures; we in the prophetic need to point people to the scripture as the way forward for their lives.

Wharton: Our laziness has really driven this prophetic industry. We don't read our bible and so we all want to hear is a word supposedly from the Lord.

Husbands: You want to hear a word because you haven't read the word! Unfortunately, the prophetic industry thrives on our ignorance and our lack of knowledge. So that is a very, very significant thing. Teaching by those who are in the prophetic, not prophetic preaching, prophetic teaching by those who understand what the prophetic word is. It is vital because it is going to save us from a lot of problems. In terms of the warnings about the spirit of the prophet, whether the man is just out to get glory, or whether the man is just out to get money, those are the two things that we need to be leery of. If you do a survey of the current prophetic industry, you are going to see that those are the two sins that are prevalent. As you rightly said before, lazy people want to get a word without putting in the effort.

Wharton: Amen my brother, thank you so very much! Thanks for a job well done.

Statements

Carlyle Collins

This is a brief record of the testimony of Carlyle Collins, concerning the prophetic ministry of Ian David, a member of the Ann's Grove COGOP of Guyana, South America.¹⁴ Over a three-year period, certain individuals experienced miraculous healings, and several received personal prophesies. One young lady who was unable to walk, was miraculously healed. A father received a prophetic word that his son will buy a car and take him on trips. Two individuals were told that their difficult visa problems would be worked out. These prophetic messages were all fulfilled. Collins also mentioned, that Roxanne Hanover, Janette and Phillip Jones, ministers of the Guyana COGOP organization, also similarly prophesy under the Spirit's influence.

Clayton and Sonia Martin

The Martins likewise testified of Ian David and his being used by the Spirit in the prophetic ministry. They mention similar precise prophetic utterances on a variety of issues, that they personally witnessed, while David was in the Cayman Island. The revelatory nature and accuracy of his prophetic utterances could not be known by human means, and serves to further buttress the issue of this impromptu prophesying Spirit phenomenon.¹⁵

¹⁴ Collins, Carlyle. Interview with Compton D. Wharton. Personal interview. Washington DC, July 25, 2016. Collins is a Bishop and District Overseer in the Guyana COGOP organization. This interview was conducted via telephone.

¹⁵ Martin, Clayton, Martin, Sonia. Interview with Compton D. Wharton. Personal interview. Bessemer, January 20, 2016. Bishop Martin is the Presbyter of the COGOP community (English speaking Caribbean). Interview conducted during the 2016 January Global Pentecostal D.Min second cohort, held at COGOP camp site in Bessemer, AL. Bishop Martin and wife Sonia were students of the D.Min class.

Guyana

COGOP in Guyana experienced a visitation of the prophetic manifestation, during a forty-day period between the last week of December 1969, and the month of January 1970. Many who had already been Spirit baptized and manifested tongues speech, further prophesied during this period. Joel's Spirit baptism and its prophesying element were experienced by members of the group who were part of this unusual visitation. Several miraculous events also accompanied this visitation. Many received personal prophecies relative to their gifts and ministry callings, and now as adults, testify to the accuracy of those Spirit utterances. One such individual is Andrew Husbands, who at said Spirit visitation period was just sixteen. His specific directives, received on 12th January 1970, were that he would be used by the Spirit as a teacher, in administration and business, and additionally with the prophetic gifting. Today, Andrew Husbands, is all of that. The prophetic utterances were very accurate.¹⁶

Additionally, in November 1981, a similar visitation was also experienced at a local COGOP body in North Ruimveldt, Guyana, during a three-week revival where demons were cast out, and other miraculous events experienced. One night, during the revival, there was a rushing wind that came into the building, moving one minister to lay hands on several who attended, with the immediate result being that those individuals spontaneously began to prophesy. A subsequent evaluation revealed that those who prophesied that night, were all previously Spirit baptized, having experienced the tongues phenomenon.¹⁷ These unusual Spirit encounters, have, for those involved, undoubtedly

¹⁶ Compton D. Wharton, *Personal Diary*. 1969-1970.

¹⁷ *Diary*, 1981.

been an important formative feature of their spirituality, as some individuals can presently affirm that this prophesying praxis, having matured over the decades, forms a meaningful part of their current ministry gifting. There is a recognition of a link to Joel's Spirit outpouring, and prophesying.

For the Record: D H Queener (A COGOP Prophet?)

L. V. Jones provided the following information on the late D. H. Queener, who stated that the Lord would often tell him to go to certain places, at times when he had no financial means of him getting there.¹⁸ On one such occasion, he arrived at the airport without a ticket and told the ticket attendant that he thought they should have a ticket for him. The answer was in the affirmative. On another occasion, he was apparently stranded on an island. He told the church folks that the Lord was sending a plane to pick him up. A military plane did land on the island, with the specific purpose of picking him up. The pilot indicated that military planes are never sent to pick up stranded civilians, and he was unsure how this happened.

On other occasions, he stated that the Lord told him to go to different countries and just plant a church flag. Years after, ministers of the COGOP organization would establish churches in those countries. One night at a COGOP Assembly when Queener got to the podium, he said that the Lord told him to get on his knees. He did this several times, and there was a marked presence of the Spirit of God in the Assembly. This news got around, and the people who had left, began to return to the gathering. Soon the place

¹⁸ Jones, L. V. Interview with Compton D. Wharton. Personal interview. Bessemer, October 24, 2017. The late L. V. Jones was Presiding Bishop of the COGOP churches in the State of Alabama. Contents of a taped phone conversation.

was filled, and many experienced the power of God's Spirit, without Queener preaching. Jones stated that Queener was unorthodox, and unique in his ministry, but that he undoubtedly was a "Man of God."¹⁹

Conclusion

This Project Design Chapter made use of the Qualitative Data Collection Analysis method, to bring some clarity to the prophesying praxis as experienced in the COGOP organization. The semi-structured interview of this methodology was used, as its flexibility seemed suitable to the goal of fleshing out the needed relevant data that would enable us to comprehend how this prophesying issue historically functioned in the target group.

For the two main interviews, a basic questionnaire allowed them to give substance to COGOP'S historic practice of this Spirit speech's problem, the Biblical and Theological soundness, and the Academic Community's schools of thought. COGOP'S praxis seems to favor preaching and the equivalent prophesying praxis of tongues and interpretation, while the Academic Community apparently leans towards an impromptu manifestation. The Biblical and Theological soundness seems to allow for the impromptu. Additionally, three descriptions from COGOP members seem to indicate the praxis of the impromptu aspect. These ideas will make a meaningful contribution to the thesis' outcome.

¹⁹ Some of these experiences of Queener's as related by Bishop Jones, were confirmed by Yvonne Collins of Tyler Texas, a former daughter in-law of Queener. Foster & Darlene Bell, *Queener, the Man Behind the Preaching* (TN: White Wing Publishing House, 1976), is an out of print book that sought to address some of Queener's history.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

In consideration of the different views about prophesying in the global Christian community, it was essential to provide clarity to that aspect of prophesying that is the focus of this thesis. It is a reference to an impromptu, instantaneous kind of utterance that is informed by the Spirit, and not to preaching. This thesis has endeavored to make an inquiry into the specifics of this prophesying praxis as to how it manifested in COGOP, a century old Pentecostal organization. In addition to COGOP's limited written account of its history, this thesis considered relevant Literature, the Biblical and Theological factors, and conducted personal interviews of knowledgeable COGOP individuals. Together, these resources provided the data necessary to enable a meaningful evaluation of the thesis-project.

Since this Spirit speech has exhibited a historic tendency to present the church with possibilities for problematic misuse and abuse, it was necessary that this aspect of the Spirit manifestation also be addressed. This problematic area also includes competition from wicked spirit sources and indigenous folk religion practices that counterfeit the genuine prophesying gift of the Holy Spirit. Regarding this negative element of the prophesying praxis, this concluding chapter will offer suggestions for corrective measures; a discernment methodology will be considered.

Thesis Interaction

The Problem in Its Setting

This section of the thesis introduced preliminary issues of relevance to prophesying. It considered such Scriptures as Joel 2:28-29, concerning the Spirit's outpouring and its link to prophesying, and the connection to its Acts 2 fulfillment; it was this event that introduced the tongues-speech phenomenon. This tongues-speech is the Spirit manifestation that became so crucial to the modern Pentecostalism movement, and its signature experience of Spirit Baptism. It was in that prevailing atmosphere of the tongues phenomenon that A. J. Tomlinson functioned, when he experienced his Spirit Baptism in the 1908 Annual Assembly of his holiness organization. This thesis has suggested that during Tomlinson's Spirit Baptism, when he spoke in various tongues, and visited and interacted with the different people groups on the various continents, he was presenting the gospel to them in their native languages. This is not 'unknown tongues,' but prophesying, done through the vehicle of tongues, like the Acts 2 event.

The contrast between prophesying and tongues was shown to be between two forms of inspired speech. Tongues is inspired speech that is not intelligible, and thus indicates the importance of the sister gift of interpretation, to bring the message into the realm of human understanding. This explanation is helpful in allowing us to understand why Paul contrasts prophesying and tongues, not in regards to inspiration, but rather intelligibility. Both are Spirit inspired forms of speech. However, tongues (*glossolalia*) is unintelligible, while prophesying is intelligible. Having been birthed in a solid 'tongues' atmosphere, the COGOP organization was informed by its foundational experience, and

thus their Pentecostal spirituality was formed with a strong attachment to the ‘tongues and interpretation’ praxis option, the viable alternative of the prophesying Spirit-speech.

Literature Review

This chapter analyzed the thesis issue through research of a select number of literature resources that have presented academic views on the subject, in consideration of whether it is an aberration or an anomaly, or one that has existed as a genuine Spirit manifestation.

Relative to an early historic praxis of the prophesying and tongues phenomena, the research showed from statements by Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, and Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, two early church fathers, that there was continuity of these Spirit manifestations, three centuries after the first-generation early church leaders. There was also strong support from several Pentecostal academic scholars to the genuine nature of prophesying as inspired spontaneous speech, consisting of intelligible messages, orally delivered in the gathered assembly, and intended for the edification or encouragement of the people. They also emphasize that the Spirit’s activity in prophecy was not the same as that of sermons that are generated through much study and human mental activity.

The texts of I Corinthians 14:29-32, and 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21, show spontaneity, revelation, and the need for corporate discernment, demonstrating a clear difference between prophesying and preaching. The Pauline text in 1 Timothy 1:18 concerning “the former prophecies about you,” indicated the methodology through which Timothy’s personal ministry gifts were identified. Though preaching is also a Spirit-enabled gift, it cer-

tainly could not meet such specific needs. Acts 11:27-28, and 21:10-11, show the predictive element of the gift, further demonstrating that prophesying is a Spirit-based spontaneous act, thus differentiated from preaching. Scholars also presented a formidable list of documented cases that showed the global manifestation of Spirit phenomena, that included visions, dreams, prophecies, miracles, healings, speaking in tongues, and interpretation of tongues.

They also mentioned the rise of the prophetic movement, where prophecies were a regular feature during worship services, and where people were seeking personal guidance. This movement suffered due to false prophesying and other questionable issues, which demonstrate the need for a discernment methodology to test such spirit utterances.

Also mentioned was the Cessationism school of thought that considers prophesying as preaching, and the belief that all supernatural Spirit gifts were given for the establishment of the gospel in the period of the apostles and early church. Consequently, any modern tongues-speech and spontaneous prophesying are treated as false. In consideration of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary presented in this thesis, the viewpoint of its main proponent, John McArthur, seems as to be an eisegetical exercise that is couched in an exegetical framework.

Biblical & Theological Foundations

Since the Biblical worldview establishes the standard for this Spirit manifestation, this chapter was an inquiry into its theological perspective.

Old Testament texts taken from 2 Chronicles 20, Numbers 11, 1 Samuel 10 and

19, that deal with the prophesying phenomenon were reviewed. These texts most assuredly demonstrate a Spirit phenomenon quite different from a well-studied prepared message that goes with the art of preaching, and further served to demonstrate the nature of Old Testament prophesying as being impromptu and spontaneous messages, uttered through the agency of God's Spirit. Evidently, the sign of the Spirit's anointing presence was the impromptu and spontaneous ability to prophesy. Irrespective of the precise content of their prophesying, under no circumstance could any of those events qualify as preaching.

Jeremiah 23 plainly speaks to a prevailing problem that is associated with the prophesying phenomenon – the abandoned eagerness to be God's mouthpiece, that leads so often to the declaration of one's own inner thoughts. It is an area of spirit-speech that is fraught with the possibility for deception and error. Discernment is needed to qualify those who prophesy, to evaluate if they genuinely have been in God's counsel. Balaam serves as the prototype of the prophesying praxis, and its potential for error and deception. God communicated with him, giving several amazing pro-Israel and Messianic prophecies, which are contained in chapters 22 and 23. However, chapters 25 and 31 revealed that this is the same man who used his prophetic ability to influence the Moabite women to lead the Israelite men into sexual immorality and idolatry that elicited God's judgment, leading to the deaths of 24,000 of them. Obviously, he was a very troubled prophet who had an audience with God, and uttered genuine impromptu, spontaneous prophecies. His true nature however, appeared to be that of a soothsayer, thus his recognition as the fountainhead of prophetic counterfeits, steeped in error, greed, and deception.

A brief New Testament survey mentioned Acts 2 as the fulfillment of the prophecy in Joel 2:28, 29 about the Spirit's coming and its link to prophesying. The Acts 2 text reveals that authentic languages were spoken to the hearers, for they understood the Spirit speeches. They were spontaneous impromptu declarations of messages from God – no premeditation, or study, as is the primary case in preaching. Since Joel declared that prophesying would be a direct result of the Spirit's outpouring, then Pentecost Day in Acts 2 was prophesying, and this consequently would qualify both the tongues speech, and the understanding of what was spoken.

It was also mentioned that the Spirit's visitations in the book of Acts revealed the ability to speak in some form, for audible signs were evident, tongues also being part of this. Essential also for prophesying to be considered as genuine was the factor of revelation, since even the secrets of strangers' hearts are revealed, and only God can know this. The following cases were seen to demonstrate this revelatory factor: (1) Agabus the prophet in Acts 11:28, and 21:10-11; (2) Acts 13:2 the Spirit's call to Paul and Barnabas; (3) Luke 22:74 where Jesus, though being blindfolded, is told to prophesy who hit him; (4) John 11:51 where Caiaphas speaks of Jesus's death for all people.

Project Design: Primary Interviews

Adrian Varlack, COGOP'S Historian, stated that "tongues and interpretation" confirmed both the divorce and remarriage doctrine, and A. J. Tomlinson's selection as General Overseer for life. These Spirit manifestations settled those issues. However, Varlack did say that Tomlinson promoted the authority of Scripture as the organization's final settlement of issues. For the COGOP organization, prophesying is mainly preaching.

Though there have been references to people saying that someone prophesied over them about becoming a preacher or teacher, that would be the closest COGOP came to appreciate prophetic utterances that were spontaneous, not preceded by tongues, but COGOP has never developed this as a kind of praxis.

Concerning discernment, Varlack mentioned that COGOP has never developed principles of practice - there is a lack of a corporate discernment methodology relevant to 1 Corinthians 14 and the validating of prophetic utterances. Speaking of the Biblical and Theological soundness of an impromptu prophesying practice, as different from the art of preaching, Varlack suggested looking at it from the middle. This is the idea of listening to individuals who were former Cessationists, but are now Pentecostals, and consequently able to help Pentecostals with a more balanced view of the issue. He did state that the New Testament is clear on the issue of impromptu prophesying, admitting that it is Biblical, though some of the theological views on it have clouded it up.

Andrew Husbands, a COGOP pastor, and final year DMin student at Gordon-Conwell, stated that though some academics admit that there could be a prophetic unction while someone is preaching, they nevertheless recognize a definite distinction in the New Testament in the gifts of prophesying, and preaching. These are renowned New Testament scholars, who posit that prophesying is not preaching. Husbands understood this as a disconnect between the COGOP'S doctrinal stance or praxis, and the New Testament's, for in New Testament theology, there is an identifiable prophetic gifting for which people are recognized. The COGOP'S praxis, based on his research is two-fold: Tongues and interpretation of tongues, and secondly, a supernatural intervention while preaching the Word.

In relation to COGOP'S dependence on tongues and interpretation as a pivotal decision-making tool, Husbands mentioned A. J. Tomlinson's quest for theocratic government and his reliance on these prophetic utterances to accompany significant decisions. Consequently, in terms of the praxis, COGOP has relied on tongues and interpretation as a measuring rod of God's seal of approval. So, while the spontaneous prophetic is not normal in COGOP, tongues and interpretation of tongues are, and that equals prophesying.

Concerning Acts 2, Husbands stated that Pentecostals have majored on *glossolalia*, the tongues evidence with its problems, when in fact, on Pentecost Day they spoke in 'known languages' under the Spirit's anointing, thus miraculously and spontaneously declaring God's Word to others, even though the speakers themselves did not understand. This is prophesying as Joel predicted. He mentioned the need of the prophetic ministry to be subject to the government of the church, and that there is healthy manifestation of the prophetic in COGOP globally. On the beneficial aspects of the prophetic, Husbands mentioned that there is a revelational aspect of the prophetic which is transformative. There is an aspect of the prophetic that releases saints into new things. It can tell you about what is going on, so that it releases you into your future, or it can explain your past, so that you can understand your present, enabling you to live victoriously. He lamented the present climate, where charlatans and hirelings dominate the prophetic, a global merchandising of the prophetic for personal gain.

Concerning the need for corrective measures and standards that will assist in corporate discernment, he specified the teaching ministry. Teach the truth, and manifest what genuine prophesying is! Husbands acknowledged that written academic material on

discernment is very sparse, but recommended that even if the prophet's words are authentic, his spirit must be discerned – this is the Balaam factor. Thus, corrective measures should include developing spiritual character amongst our people, and developing the ability to discern. He also stated that many people rely on the prophetic instead of the Bible, and that is dangerous. Therefore, the prophetic ministry needs to point people to the Scriptures as the way forward for their lives. Unfortunately, the prophetic industry thrives on a lack of knowledge of the Word.

Statements

Carlyle Collins

Carlyle Collins' statement concerning the prophetic ministry of Ian David, a member of the Ann's Grove COGOP, of Guyana, indicated that David had a genuine prophetic ministry with spontaneous personal prophecies that were fulfilled.¹ Healings were also experienced in his meetings. Collins also mentioned that Roxanne Hanover, Janette and Phillip Jones, ministers of the Guyana COGOP organization, also similarly prophesy under the Spirit's influence.

Clayton and Sonia Martin

The Martins likewise testified of Ian David and his being used by the Spirit in the prophetic ministry.² They mentioned prophetic utterances on a variety of issues that they

¹ Carlyle Collins is a Bishop and District Overseer in the Guyana COGOP organization.

² General Presbyter Clayton Martin and wife Sonia, of the COGOP community (English speaking Caribbean).

personally witnessed while David was in the Cayman Islands. The messages were accurate, and their revelatory nature could not be known by human means; this serves to further buttress the issue of this impromptu prophesying Spirit phenomenon.

Guyana

COGOP in Guyana experienced a visitation of the prophetic manifestation during a forty-day period between the last week of December 1969, and the month of January 1970. Many who had already been Spirit baptized and manifested tongues speech, further prophesied during this period. Many received personal prophecies relative to their gifts and ministry callings, and now as adults, testify to the accuracy of those Spirit utterances.³

Additionally, in November 1981, a similar visitation was also experienced at a local COGOP body in North Ruimveldt, Guyana, during a three-week revival where demons were cast out, and other miraculous events were experienced. One night, there was a rushing wind that came into the building, and several of those individuals began to spontaneously prophesy. A subsequent evaluation revealed that those who prophesied that night, were all previously Spirit baptized, having experienced the tongues phenomenon.

For the Record: D H Queener (A COGOP Prophet?)

L. V. Jones in his statement on the late D. H. Queener, minister of COGOP, recounted several unusual spontaneous Spirit encounters that Queener experienced. These

³ Compton D. Wharton, *Diary*, 1969 and 1970.

encounters testified to his ministry's prophetic nature. Jones stated that though Queener was unorthodox and unique in his ministry, he undoubtedly was a "Man of God."⁴

The Need to Discern or Evaluate Oral Spirit Messages

The foregoing information on prophesying gathered from these different sources, indicates a genuine Spirit manifestation that has also shown possibilities for error and the attraction of charlatans. This information shows the need for a methodology of discernment or evaluation of the prophesying praxis that would enable the saints to better sift the utterances, and so reap the benefits from the Spirit's gifts. The Psalmist cried out, "I am your servant; give me discernment that I may understand your statutes" (Ps 119:125). Isaiah joined in agreement: "so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the Lord has done this." (Isa 41:20). Discernment brings clarity, creates understanding, thus allowing a decision to the benefit of God's people. But the importance of the Spirit's agency in the process must not be underestimated or overlooked, since these are spiritual issues, "discerned only through the Spirit" (1 Cor 2:14) - the Spirit explaining spiritual realities.⁵ This was what the Bereans did when they "searched" the Scriptures to check the veracity of Paul's and Silas' message (Acts 17:11).

It therefore requires persons with the Spirit to make these judgments (1 Cor 2:15);

⁴ Bishop L. V. Jones, the late presiding Bishop of COGOP churches in the State of Alabama.

⁵ A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. IV (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1931), 90. *Pneumatikos*: spiritual. *Anakrinetai*: discern, examine, judge, question, investigate, determine. It is a sifting process to get at the truth by investigation as of a judge, and it is the *pneumatikos* man who is qualified to perform this *anakrinetai* task. So, *pneumatikos*, spiritual, as is all that is produced and maintained among men by the operation of the Spirit of God (W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1981), 65); *anakrino*, (a derivative of *krino*) to distinguish, or separate out as to investigate, to hold a preliminary judicial examination preceding the trial proper; of discerning or determining the excellence or defects of a person or thing (Vine, *Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 314.)

thus Paul's instruction on prophetic utterances, to "let the 'others weigh' carefully what is said" (1 Cor 14:29).⁶ Though he does not provide a discernment methodology, or criteria, for this process, Paul certainly rejects the idea of throwing the baby out with the bath water: Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt, but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil (1 Thess 5:19-22). Thus, in his dealing with the uncomfortable negative aspect that the oral Spirit gifts sometimes generate, Paul's answer is not to allow fear to incapacitate us, consequently hindering or rejecting the Spirit's working amongst us, but rather, the implementation of a control mechanism that would effectively 'test' the messages, thereby differentiating between the good and the evil.⁷

Towards a Pentecostal Discernment Methodology

Stephen Parker provided some ideas in regards to this critical area of discernment.⁸ He laments that there is still so little study that the movement has presented in this area of discernment and decision making.⁹ He notes that some Pentecostalism Academics have stated that Pentecostals go about the business of theological reflection 'backwards', that their 'experience has preceded their hermeneutics', and that they 'first experience something, then rush to the scripture after the fact to reach for a rationale for what has

⁶ Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 184. Weigh: *diakrinetosan*, to decide, discern, judge. Compare the gift of discerning of spirits "*diakriseis pneumatation*" in 1 Cor 12:10 (Vine, *Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament*, 280); *diakrino*: to separate throughout, discriminate, discern, decide, judge.

⁷ Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 38. *Dokimazete*: prove all things. Even the gift of prophecy is to be tested to avoid error.

⁸ Stephen E. Parker, *Led by the Spirit, Toward a Practical Theology of Pentecostal Discernment and Decision Making* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

⁹ Parker, *Led by the Spirit*, 20.

happened to them.¹⁰ Parker's quotes also stated that these Spirit manifestations are not in themselves sufficient for decision making in discerning the Spirit's leading,¹¹ for Pentecostal Theology makes allowance for a spiritual dimension in human affairs that also allows for possible manifestations of the powers of darkness.¹² Since there are three sources of these manifestations: the Holy Spirit, one's own spirit, or demonic influence, the importance of a checks and balance mechanism becomes most evident.¹³

A basic form of such a mechanism, or discernment methodology, suggests a reliance on Christian tradition, particularly the Scriptures, and the messenger: Does the manifestation bring glory to God, honor the Lordship of Christ, and agree with Scriptures? Does the messenger exhibit spiritual maturity, and does the manifestation promote unity in the body of Christ?¹⁴ Reliance on hierarchical structures of authority within the congregation is also advanced as a discernment principle.¹⁵ This structure is used by Pentecostal Catholics to carefully control prophesying. Potentially disruptive utterances are managed by a group leader, and questionable prophecies are invalidated in 'discernment' sessions by such leaders.¹⁶

Parker does suggest that Pentecostals would benefit from a theological methodology of discernment that would allow for the retention of the focus on experience, while

¹⁰ Parker, *Led by the Spirit*, 21. Quoted in Gordon D. Fee, *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody, Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 83. Section on 'Hermeneutics and Historical Precedent – A Major Problem in Pentecostal Hermeneutics.'

¹¹ Parker, *Led by the Spirit*, 34. From Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (JPTSup, 1: Sheffield: JSOT Press), and Macchia, 'Sighs too Deep for Words: Toward a Theology of Glossolalia', JPT 1: 47-73.

¹² Parker, *Led by the Spirit*, 35. From Hiebert, an Anthropologist and Missiologist, 'Discerning the Work of God', in Robeck (ed.) 1985: 147-63.

¹³ Parker, *Led by the Spirit*, 34. From Spittler, 'Glossolalia', in Burgess, McGee, and Alexander (eds.) 1988: 335-41.

¹⁴ Parker, *Led by the Spirit*, 35, quoted in Hiebert, *Discerning the Work of God*, 147-63.

¹⁵ Parker, *Led by the Spirit*, 36, quoted in M. McGuire, *Pentecostal Catholics: Power, Charisma, and Order in a Religious Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), 93.

¹⁶ Parker, *Led by the Spirit*, 36.

satisfying the criteria for a critical theology.¹⁷ He uses Tillich's theology to aid in an understanding of Pentecostal discernment as 'revelatory occurrences.' It provides a role for experience, but guards against excesses. This methodology recommends two criteria to judge revelation: it is the combining of ecstasy with structure, and both elements must be retained.¹⁸ This forms Parker's appeal to a broader Christian tradition, in the attempt to better understand the revelatory praxis, and to offer evaluative guidelines for their judgment.¹⁹ Balance, as Varlack suggested.

However, Parker admits that there will always be difficulty in the judging of some claims to the Spirit's leading, due to the Spirit's mysterious ways, and the extreme complexity of human behavior.²⁰ His four main guidelines are: (1) Holistic knowing; an integrative model that accepts both reason and affection. (2) Integrate the needs of the individual and the community by discussing the Spirit experiences. (3) Include broader perspectives from outside the Pentecostal tradition in the evaluation process. (4) Consider ambiguity: the tension between the complexity of human behavior that includes human fallibility and the mysterious acts of God's divine Spirit.

David Aune suggests that Paul's advice in 1 Corinthians 14:29, with regards to the revelatory gifts of prophets, is that "when they are not prophesying, they are expected

¹⁷ Parker, *Led by the Spirit*, 37.

¹⁸ Parker, *Led by the Spirit*, 173-74, in Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951, 1967, 1963). His concept of ecstatic knowing includes what is called affective knowing. Ecstatic reason recognized dimensions of knowing that are less technically rational and more holistic in that both affective and cognitive dimensions of knowing are involved. Without the conjoining of structure and ecstasy one only has access to a technical reason that can never know fully the things of the Spirit.

¹⁹ Parker, *Led by the Spirit*, 195.

²⁰ Parker, *Led by the Spirit*, 174, 198, 202. Parker's criteria draw from other perspectives, including Tillich's theology. In this model, assessment of a person's spiritual maturity would include consideration of criteria for positive transformation drawn from all three perspectives: psychological health, theological soundness, and faithfulness and continuity with normative Pentecostal narratives and tradition.

to participate in the evaluation of the prophetic utterances of others.”²¹ He states that a key distinction between OT and NT prophets is that the latter was subject to the authority of the Christian community and its leaders, but also mentioned that discerning the true from the false indicated that no prophet was exempt from testing. This emphasis on testing the prophet and his prophecy, both OT and NT, seems to apply within the community gathering and Aune proposes two solutions to the problem of conflicting messages: either the spirit speaking through the prophet is a lying or evil one, or the prophet himself is deceitful.²² With reference to the 1 John 4:1-3 text of testing the spirits, this refers to the spirit of error that spoke through false prophets, who would fail the ‘physicality of the incarnation’ doctrinal test. In Matthew 7:15-23, the test as prescribed by the Lord himself, was one of behavior – their fruit.²³

Aune, in addressing Paul’s evaluating of Christian prophecy (1 Thess 5:19-22; 1 Cor 12:10; 14:29) states that “these references are all-important since they constitute the earliest evidence that Christian prophecy was subject to some form of community control.”²⁴ In the 1 Thessalonians 5 text, he sees injunctions against Christians resisting and despising the impulses of the Spirit who seeks to manifest his presence through prophetic speech. There is also an injunction to test everything as a general principle, including congregational prophesying, where the will of God must be discerned to retain the profitable and reject the worthless. Aune does not see this as the function of a restricted group, nor as a spiritual gift or insight, but a fully rational procedure where they are judged

²¹ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 196.

²² Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 217. He states that the testing criteria were so vague, they were virtually useless. He also argues for the prophetic character of both the prophet and his composition. Husbands in his Interview, also mentioned the necessity of this double testing.

²³ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 218-19.

²⁴ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 219.

based on their coherence with accepted customs and norms.²⁵

Because of the close relationship between prophesying and its evaluation in 1 Corinthians 14:29, Aune recognizes a connection between the gift of prophecy, and the gift of distinguishing between spirits, just as there is between tongues and the gift of interpretation tongues.²⁶ In the text of 1 Corinthians 14:37-38, “If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized;” it seems that Paul assumes that prophets and other charismatically gifted individuals would have the necessary anointing to discern that his writings are authorized by the Lord. Consequently, they should be able to discern prophetic utterances. The reference then to “the others” (*hoi alloi*) in 1 Corinthians 14:29, should be referring to the ‘other prophets’ who are qualified to discern.²⁷ Wayne Grudem, however, takes issue with this interpretation, preferring an interpretation that leans towards the “others” as a reference that also includes the congregation, not only elders, prophets, or those with the gift of discernment of spirits.²⁸

²⁵ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 219-20.

²⁶ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 220-21. *Diakriseis pneumatōn*: the gift of distinguishing or discerning between spirits. The most appropriate translation for both the noun in 1 Cor 12:10 and the verb in 1 Cor 14:29 is “evaluation” and “evaluate” respectively, since this term combines the notions of discrimination, interpretation, and examination in a suitably ambiguous way. J. D. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, 233-36. To sum up, ‘discerning of spirits’ is to be understood as *evaluation of prophetic utterances, and investigating and interpreting which throws light on their source and their significance*.

²⁷ Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity*, 221. The interpretative problem centers in the phrase *hoi alloi*, “the others,” which may refer to “the other prophets” or the other Christians present. In 1 Cor 14:31, where Paul says *dynasthe gar kath’ hena pantes peopheteuein* (“for you can all prophesy one by one”), he is specifically addressing the prophets, not everyone. That would make it more probable that *hoi alloi* in v. 29 means the other *prophets*.

²⁸ Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy: In the New Testament and Today* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2000), 54-57. He thinks that if Paul had meant to say, “Let the rest of the prophets weigh what is said,” he would probably have used words other than “the others.” The Greek “*hoi loipoi*” would have been most appropriate if this had been Paul’s meaning.

David Hill's information concerning the decline of prophecy is noteworthy.²⁹ He mentions how the Hellenization of the Church with its emphasis on the spirituality and rationality of the faith, created an atmosphere of reliance more on rational and didactic forms of spiritual utterance, that subsequently resulted in the replacing of prophets by teachers. Other schools of thought attribute it to two main factors: the increased authority of an official ministry in the institutionalized Church, and the lack of proper transmission of apostolic truth. It is possible that both factors contributed to the decline of the prophetic ministry, for if prophets fail to perform their God given function, something else will fill the vacuum that is created.

Hill does present additional thoughtful insights. He mentions the preponderance of active false prophets in the early stages of the Church's life that consequently undermined the genuine prophetic voice, and the Church's woeful inability to benefit from the charisma of discernment that resulted in its inability to safeguard genuine prophecy from the excesses of charlatans. Hill makes a significant observation, that even though the Church effectively used some criteria to unmask false prophets, they failed to balance it with the ability to discern and retain the true elements. Consequently, the preponderance of false prophets overwhelmed the genuine, contributing to the decline of the prophetic ministry, a warning from Irenaeus that the Church failed to hear, resulting in the loss of "immensely valuable contribution to its life that comes from the genuinely inspired prophetic utterance."³⁰

Relative to the methodology of judging prophecy, Grudem states that it seems evident from the Greek word that Paul uses, *diakrino*, "conscientiously weighing one's own

²⁹ David Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), 191-92.

³⁰ Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 192. A reference to Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.* 3.9.9).

attitudes and actions, carefully sorting and evaluating them and determining which are right and which are not,” is the appropriate word for 1 Corinthians 14:29, with the idea of evaluating the prophetic voices. To him, these texts have nothing to do with judging the prophets themselves, only the message, and the standard or criterion for evaluating or weighing these prophecies seems always to be Scripture (Acts 17:11; 1 Cor 14:37-38; 1 John 4:2-3, 6).³¹

Ben Johnson, in identifying the soul’s four capacities for discernment (intuition, imagination, memory, and will) suggests caution, for reason accommodates these to enable us to discern God’s will. Acknowledging pitfalls in the discernment process, even self-deception, he recommends balance, the introduction of two levels of control, one by the individual prophetic voice, and the other, corporate consensus.³² Dealing with the confusion generated in the Corinthian church over the manifestation of the prophetic gifts, Paul stated that “God is not the God of confusion, but of peace” (1 Cor 14:33). Johnson uses this to indicate that in its long tradition of discernment, the Church has always acknowledged that the peaceful state of the soul is a clue to God’s will. Consequently, he offers a twin discernment principle of clarity that removes rational confusion, and peace that removes emotional confusion.³³

Bill Hamon has recognized this potential for abuse and extremes, and has consequently suggested some pitfalls to be on the guard against: (1) An overemphasis on personal prophecy; (2) Removing oneself from under authority of church leadership; (3) Presumptuous, critical, and judgmental prophesying.³⁴ He has also issued a proposal for the

³¹ Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, 57-62.

³² Ben Campbell Johnson, *Discerning God’s Will* (Pittsburgh: Vital Faith Resources, 1990), 61-66.

³³ Johnson, *Discerning God’s Will*, 113-114.

³⁴ Bill Hamon, *Prophets, Pitfalls and Principles* (Shippensburg: Destiny Image, 1991), 120.

establishing of a standard, to both assist in the maturity of those who prophesy, and to help in weeding out charlatans. It is called the 10 Ms for Maturing and Maintaining Manhood and Ministry, and determining their false and true status.³⁵

Guidelines for Judging/Discerning the Prophesying Praxis

1. To develop the critical ability to discern, employ a holistic Teaching Ministry that is spiritually matured, experienced, and knowledgeable.
2. The ability to discern and repudiate the false must be balanced by the ability to retain the true.
3. Provide balance: Look at issues from the middle – consider the views of the broader Christian tradition.
4. Practice the genuine prophetic gifts.
5. Recognize that spirit manifestations are not in themselves sufficient for decision making in the discerning of the Spirit's leading.
6. Reliance on Scripture is pivotal: Does the manifestation agree with Scripture?
7. Does the messenger exhibit spiritual maturity?
8. Questionable utterances should be invalidated in discernment sessions by qualified leaders.
9. Disruptive utterance should be managed by qualified leadership.

Bill Hamon, Th.B., Th.M., D.D. In 1967, he founded Christian International School of Theology and in 1970 the first CI Extension Colleges were established. A prolific author, he also has a strong ministry of prophesying over believers, assisting them with their ministry gifts, like Paul's prophetic utterance over Timothy.

³⁵ Hamon, *Prophets, Pitfalls and Principles*, 66. The 10 M's: Manhood – God makes a man before a good ministry; Ministry – By their fruits they are known; Message – Speaking the truth in love, balanced message; Maturity – human relationships, dependable; Marriage – God 1st, wife & family, then church; Methods – integrity, ethical, honest; Manners – polite, kind, discreet; Money – love of and materialism destroys; Morality – virtuous, & sexual purity; Motive – to serve, to minister not for fame.

10. Focus on Pentecostal experience should be retained, along with satisfying the criteria of critical theology.
11. Consider ambiguity: the tension between the complexity of human behavior that includes human fallibility and the sovereign mysterious acts of God's divine Spirit.
12. The introduction of two levels of control: One by the individual prophetic voice, and the other, corporate consensus.
13. Consider a twin discernment principle: Clarity that removes rational confusion, and peace that removes emotional confusion.
14. Be on guard for an overemphasis on personal prophecies.
15. Be on guard for presumptuous, critical, judgmental prophecies.

Conclusion

From the Biblical and Theological Foundation, there seems to be a strong case for prophesying as a genuine Spirit praxis that is impromptu in its nature, with features that allow for a differentiation from preaching. There is also a broader view of the phenomenon's praxis in the NT, with new oral speeches of tongues and interpretation as being prophesying's equivalent.

In a brief survey of the approximately first three hundred years A.D., the Literature Review indicated that the Spirit's supernatural gifts, including prophesying, were still in operation. These sources, combined with the support of Pentecostal Scholars, show that the prophesying praxis enabled impromptu inspired utterances informed by the Spirit - no notes, no studying, no prior preparation, as is the case for sermon preparation.

To provide some balance, the opposing view of Cessationism was accounted for, mainly through its most famous modern proponent. However, in consideration of the formidable amount of positive information presented for the existence of this praxis as a genuine Spirit phenomenon, the cry of Cessationism seems somewhat muted.

For the two main interviewees of the Design Project, COGOP'S understanding of prophesying favors preaching. It has also been acknowledged that the Biblical and Theological soundness allows for the impromptu nature of this Spirit praxis, though the organization has historically favored its alternative of tongues and interpretation. This alternative praxis has also majored in its International gathering as a decision-making methodology. Additionally, statements from COGOP members indicate that the praxis of the impromptu aspect is experienced in the global third world majority nations.

This thesis suggests that from the general information gathered, COGOP could possibly benefit from a corporate research on this prophesying praxis. Since the organization also lacks a standard discernment methodology, it might be a wise investment of its time to consider such. The principles suggested in this thesis could possibly be beneficial in this area.

APPENDIX

THEY SHALL PROPHECY

A REVIEW OF THE MANIFESTATION OF THE GIFT OF PROPHECY DURING FIFTY YEARS OF MINISTRY

The purpose of this review is to state the things I have personally experienced in my Christian walk.

With specific reference to the gift of prophecy, and prophesying, my experiences have brought me to the conclusion that God still works through this gift today.

I can cite many examples, and they fall into some distinct categories, such as revelations of the past, of the present and the future. Personal and corporate prophecies, pronunciations of healings as well as ecstatic utterances.

Guyana: In 1970, The Lord spoke a word to us about my wife's future, stating she would become an 'international public servant.' This began to come to pass when she began working as a member of the Caribbean Community Secretariat around 1978.

After moving to the island of Montserrat in the Caribbean in 1983, she worked as Secretary to the Manager of an international radio station based on that island. She eventually joined the United Nations Development Program in New York City in 1987, and was placed in charge of funding U.N. Field Missions and projects around the world. She was issued a U.N. credit card to facilitate her activities, and subsequently served the U.N. for fifteen years.

Montserrat West Indies: In 1983, the Lord gave me several prophetic words about my work on that island. During a prayer meeting with several U.S. medical students who were at the time attending the off-shore medical school there, a young man

named Mark singled me out with a message from the Lord. The Lord uttered things through Mark only God could have known, then told me where and what I would be doing; that I would, “Walk in places I had never walked before.” I was used by the Lord to plant a church there. Subsequently, among other things, the Lord spoke to me to “Heal My people.” We experienced an outburst of evangelism in Montserrat with whole villages turning out to hear the Gospel.

Antigua West Indies: Simultaneous with our stay in Montserrat, I also preached in Gray’s Farm Antigua, where sick people were healed, including a sick baby who had been given up by her doctors. Her young mother came and asked me to go with her to the hospital to pray. I offered her my handkerchief to lay on the child, but she refused it and insisted that I go with her. I went and prayed with the child. The Lord healed the baby, and she was discharged from the hospital.

A few years later, I happened to meet them in another service, the mother brought the child who had by then grown into quite a young lady, and said to me, “This is the baby you blessed.” To God be the glory!

While still in Montserrat, I received and answered a call to Superintend the Churches in St. Kitts and Nevis. This call followed a prophetic message to me by a young lady born in St. Kitts and living in St. Martin at that time. Her message was, “The Lord has you for us.” That message only became clear when I got the call to go to St. Kitts. While waiting on the appointment, the Lord Spoke to me in a prophecy and told me that was not exactly where he wanted me to settle. He said, “I want you in the United States.”

I must say I was quite happy in Montserrat. But things were changing and I felt that it was time to move on. St. Kitts and Nevis seemed to be the answer. However, I was made aware that God was thinking differently.

St. Kitts and Nevis: In 1985, during a revival service in Nevis the Lord spoke a word of prophecy through me. Sitting in the front row was a brother who could not use nor move his right hand. When he heard the Lord speaking prophetically, he said quietly to the Lord, “Lord, now you are speaking, tell him about my right hand.” As soon as he said that the Lord said through me, “All right, we will pray for the right hand.” I saw the brother jump up and fling out his right hand. It was healed instantly.

New York 1988: When I first came to the United States, it was on a visitor, or tourist visa. My wife and children had already adjusted their status through the U.N. Mine was held up, and we could not tell the reason. One night the Lord put a word my mouth and said, “Pray for the United States and the United Nations.” I bowed my head and prayed. A short while after, my status adjustment was approved. I subsequently learned that the U.S. would not in the future approve these types of adjustments through the U.N. I was the final approval in that category. My wife informed me that the two entities had been fighting over it.

Malta Street Church of God of Prophecy Brooklyn, New York: I was asked to preach in a week of special services at this local church. The first Sunday morning I went there, things seemed to be in confusion. Young people were talking and being distracted by all kinds of things and hardly paying attention to what was going on. I bowed my head and asked the Lord if these were the people I was supposed to preach to.

He said in a word on my lips, “Pray, Pray!” I hardly prayed anything of significance to myself. I muttered something, for sure. When I was introduced, I began to sing. Immediately the Spirit fell on almost every young person- they were many, that’s why I was concerned. They were saved, spoke in tongues, fell to the floor, called out to God, so much so, that I was unable to preach.

I think this testimony of prophetic utterances and their effects, are worthy of consideration as to the reality of the gift of prophecy. Of course, many other incidents can be cited as proofs of the gift’s operation, but I trust that these given are sufficient evidences that God still works today.

Article presented by Frank L. Reece, COGOP minister, formerly of Guyana, presently residing in the USA.

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He has authored one book, *Neglected Commandments*.